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THE

REVOLUTIONS, INSURRECTIONS,

AND

CONSPIRACIES OF EUROPE.

VOL. II.

THE

REVOLUTIONS, INSURRECTIONS, AND CONSPIRACIES OF EUROPE.

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REVOLUTIONS,

INSURRECTIONS, AND CONSPIRACIES

OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER I.

Result of the Revolutions described in the preceding volume.—
The Feudal and Papal Systems.

SUCCESSIVE invasions had destroyed the entire framework of society in Western Europe, but a desire for order is inherent in man, and the process of reconstruction accompanied that of demolition; proceeding, however, more slowly, having no definite plan, frequently interrupted and changed by accident, but yet daily assuming more and more the form of a system. The inner life of man moulds and determines his external institutions, for these are but his embodied opinions of what he deems essential to his prosperity and his safety. We need no other proof that in the tenth century feudalism was not merely necessary, but the only

condition of social life then possible, in the universality of its establishment. The restoration of the Western Empire had been hailed throughout Europe as the pledge of universal peace, and the means by which the centralized power of Christendom could be brought to resist the invasion of the Saracens from the South, and of the pagan barbarians from the Northern seas. There can be little doubt that despotism was among the most potent of the conservative elements which preserved the Byzantine empire for resisting during a thousand years a combination of destructive agencies, any of which, singly, would have destroyed every other government of which we have read or heard in less than half a century. But centralization was the very first principle in the public opinion of the Lower Empire, whilst in Western Europe it was an element utterly forgotten and unknown. Charlemagne's empire had no metropolis, no uniform code of laws, no common language save within the walls of the church, and no feelings of nationality by which its various parts could be held together. Its unity was purely factitious, but yet that unity was so highly valued by all who had sufficient learning or imagination to speculate on the consequences of events, that, when the empire was dismembered, and a multitude of petty, obscure, isolated, and incoherent associations were formed in its stead, poets, chroniclers, and ecclesiastics believed that

they were witnessing the *aratar* of universal anarchy, and that the end of the world was at hand.

The rapid decay of royal races, particularly among nations in the transition state from barbarism to civilization, is one of the best attested facts in history. We have seen in the preceding volume the brief duration of Byzantine dynasties and Mohammedan khaliphates; amongst Christians and Mussulmans we have equally found that the inheritance of imperial power rarely brought with it the nobler heritage of ancestral courage and virtue; but, perhaps, in the whole cycle of human history, there is not a more striking instance of rapid degeneracy than that exhibited by the Carlovingian race. This family, which divided itself into so many branches, and which for more than a century occupied nearly all the thrones of Europe, had commenced by a succession of the four greatest men that ever followed each other in the direct line of descent,—Pepin d'Heristal, Charles Martel, Pepin the Short, and Charlemagne: but these were not born to royalty; even the last had no claim to princely honours at his birth. But, from the date of the revolution which gave the Carlovingian family an empire, all the princes born to their house were without a single exception utterly despicable. There was not one whose character or career can excite the slightest interest, much less kinder affection; and the annihilation of their immense power,—a fall so rapid and complete that

it has few parallels in the world's history, — was the result of their feebleness and their vices.

It is generally known, that the grants of royal domains and conquered lands, with which were united the civil and criminal administration of the districts thus ceded, had been made on the condition of military service, and were determinable on the death of the possessor. The grant was called a *beneficium*, or fief: it rendered the person on whom it was bestowed a functionary of the state as well as a proprietor of land; and his right was reasonably restricted to a life-tenure, because all the duties imposed by the terms of the grant were personal services. Even in the reign of Charlemagne we find symptoms of a desire on the part of some leading nobles to render the landed fiefs and the great offices of state hereditary; but, in the reigns of his feeble sons and grandsons, this signal revolution in the tenure of land and administration of government proceeded with a rapidity which the central power could neither check nor control.

The fiefs, which were thus changed into heritable estates, were not merely tracts of land; they included the serfs or slaves, and the free, or rather partially free, peasants, who tilled these lands on certain conditions; so that territorial property brought with it administrative power which generally extended to life and limb. The count, or royal governor, was not, indeed, always the landlord of the entire district entrusted to his charge;

but he was armed with powers which facilitated territorial acquisition. He was absolute master over his own slaves, and over those on the reserves of the crown; he was the chief magistrate to the peasants, and lieutenant of the king to the few free proprietors; and these qualifications were so blended, and so mutually strengthened each other, that it became as difficult for the king to resume what he had bestowed, as for his subjects to resist the usurpations of so powerful a ruler.

The hereditary principle of feudality was recognized by law in the year 877. Charles the Bald issued an edict from Kiersi, by which he bound himself to bestow on the son of a count, as his legal inheritance, the magistracy and honour of the country his father had enjoyed; reserving to himself the right of appointing a new governor, only when the late count died without issue. By this edict the little remaining distinction between civil government and landed property was virtually annihilated. Magisterial offices became hereditary estates, and the condition of free peasants and citizens became daily more calamitous, since they had no longer any refuge or appeal against the usurpations of the great proprietors. On the other hand, these proprietors soon obtained possession of all the counties; and thus France was, in fact, divided into as many independent sovereignties as there had previously been royal governments.

It would be a great error to suppose that this revolution was a return to anarchy: it should rather be considered the formation of a new and real social state,—the feudal organization of society; an organization so necessary, so inevitable, and so clearly the only possible consequence of all the preceding revolutions, that every existing condition of humanity voluntarily entered into its order, and assumed its colour and its form. The elements apparently the most irreconcilable with this system—the church, the municipalities, royalty itself—were all obliged to accommodate themselves to feudalism; the churches became at once *suzerains* and vassals, the cities had their lords and their serfs, and royalty hid itself under the shadow of *suzeraineté*. All possible descriptions of property were given in fief; not only estates, but certain rights that were incidental to land, as the right of cutting wood, of sporting, of fisheries, and of free passage for traffic by land and water. The casual revenues of the church became the infeudation, the fees for baptism and the churching of women were held in vassalage.

It is a fact, constantly recurring in history, that many great revolutions are effected by agents utterly unconscious of the consequences of their actions, and that new conditions of society seem to come by surprise on the very persons who have laboured most to effect their accomplishment. We often seem to see, not merely a single political

state, but the entire social system, drifting like a vessel in a storm, without rudder or compass, yet borne onwards by currents and tendencies of which the crew are unconscious, and which they even strengthen by their efforts at resistance, until she reaches a coast far different from that for which she was originally destined, and which no one knew she was approaching up to the very moment of her arrival. In such blindness and uncertainty European society was borne unconsciously into feudalism; and the miseries endured in the state of transition led men to adapt everything to the new basis of civilization, with a precipitancy such as the crew of a vessel long wandering over the world of waters would naturally exhibit in erecting their habitations and forming a settlement on an unknown shore.

Feudalism had stamped its impress on the most discordant materials, but it did not destroy the inconsistency of principle within the institution which it brought under its dominion. The church, even when most feudal in its form, was governed in its inner life by the theocratic principle, which it struggled hard to bring forward in prominence and prevalence: the prelates were never thoroughly reconciled to the domination of the feudal aristocracy; they claimed for their power a divine origin and an independent existence, and they laboured to enforce their claim, sometimes in concert with royalty, at other times by the aid of

the people, but more frequently by the assistance of the papacy, which they justly regarded as the embodied representative of their spiritual authority. Kings were still more impatient of being held in vassalage to feudalism, and of being compelled to wear its livery; the monarchical and aristocratical principles were involved in constant war, and it was in consequence of their inconsistency that the people obtained constitutional existence, by being invited to act as umpire during the contest. The municipalities, however feudal in their form, were essentially democratic in their principle, and every advance which they made in commerce and manufactures rendered them more and more impatient of the vassalage in which they were held. Finally, the serfs, though not loudest or the most noticed of the discontented, were those on whom the iron yoke of feudalism pressed most heavily, and by whom it was felt most keenly. In France, but still more signally in England, many of those who were reduced to bondage by the barons were the descendants of the free yeomen, who had been accustomed to a considerable share of independence and prosperity under their native princes, and who therefore bore with impatience a thraldom which tradition taught them to be as unjust in its origin as it was injurious in its effects. Had it been possible to combine all these elements of dissatisfaction into one great movement, feudalism would soon have been swept from the face of Eu-

rope; but, though unable to oppose all these antagonizing principles collectively, it was for centuries more than a match for any of them singly, and none dared to meet it in the open field. In fact, the history of feudalism may be thus stated: it was established by a series of revolutions, of which it was the inevitable result; and it was immediately assailed by insurrections and conspiracies, as inevitably resulting from the revived life of other principles, which these revolutions had reduced for a season to a state of suspended animation, but were very far from having totally destroyed.

The first essays towards framing a new social system in Europe were unfortunate failures; no stronger proof can be given of the inefficacy of the systems established by the Goths, the Lombards, the Franks, and the Saxons, than the ease with which they were subverted by mere handfuls of Normans and Saracens. In studying the histories of these several invasions, we are most struck by the incidental proofs we find of the want of a people both in England and France. The plunder of a convent or a monastery appears to have yielded more profit to the sea-kings than that of a city or town. Of the rural population we find very little mention in the Saxon annals of England, and still less in the Carlovingian chronicles of France; in both countries the landed proprietors seem to have preferred pasturage to tillage, and to have multiplied cattle as men diminished; for it is one

of the most inveterate errors in agricultural economy to forget that production ceases to be profitable when there is not proportionate consumption, and that the profits of the grower must depend upon the prosperity of the purchasers. Without at all hiding from ourselves the imperfections, and even the gross iniquity, of feudalism, we may still regard it as an improvement on the system which it superseded.

The essential principle of the feudal system was the union of sovereignty with property: this union, to a great extent, may be found in other systems, as, for instance, in the patriarchal, where the head of the tribe is nominally the chief owner of the land which the tribe occupies; thus, also, the heads of the Scottish clans, and of the ancient Irish septs, were at once proprietors of the land and princes of the people. In order to understand more perfectly the feudal unity of sovereignty and property, it will be convenient to compare it with that which it most nearly resembled, the ancient clan system of Ireland and Scotland. The organization of a clan or sept was very nearly patriarchal; all its members claimed a common descent with the chieftain, and bore his name; strangers, who were adopted into the tribe, were bound to intermarry with their new clan and to take its name. Each district occupied by a sept was deemed common property; but the distribution of the several shares was entrusted to the discretion of the toparch or

local chieftain, and he had the power of re-distributing the lands whenever circumstances rendered such a measure advisable. It is almost certain that this was the aboriginal form of government throughout Europe: the Germans brought the remembrance of it from their forests, and the Normans from their lakes and mountains; but they applied it under such altered circumstances as to render it a perfectly new principle.

Family connection was the basis of the clan system: so soon as adventurers formed into bands for migration and conquest, this connection was at an end, and could never again be revived. Instead of it, there may have been aggregations by chance, associations by design, or dominion imposed by force; and this latter element was predominant in the feudal system: it was created by conquerors so soon as the cessation of war, and the consequent removal of military despotism, gave them any freedom for independent action. It must not be supposed that this system was one which sprung at once into complete existence; we have seen, on the contrary, that it was of gradual growth: but it is still certain that it was based solely on the right of conquest and of brute force. The Franks in Gaul, and the Normans in England, were the only recognized aristocracy; and the family pride by which the posterity of the conquerors was long distinguished originated in the ancient ascendency of race established in the battle-field.

The social influence of feudality may be best understood by examining its primary and simple elements. Let us then consider what was the position of the holder of a fief in his own domain, and what was the state of the little society by which he was surrounded. In such a picture the baronial castle holds a prominent place; it was built as a fortress, capable of being defended against insurgent vassals, rival barons, or even the royal power. Its garrison was composed of men kept constantly trained to arms: they were sometimes favourite vassals born on the estate, but they were often hired adventurers who roamed over Europe in search of employment; they were ever ready to attend their lord to war or to the chase, and they were permitted as soldiers to more familiar intercourse than the cultivators of the surrounding soil. The lord of the castle had no society but the domestic circle,—his wife, his children, and the favoured dependants whom he chose to admit into his household. At some distance from the castle, but so situated as to be within reach of its protection, was the feudal village; a rude collection of hovels tenanted by the serfs who cultivated the baron's domain. Between them and their master there was no moral or political bond whatever. They were treated as vanquished aliens; their lord daily evinced his contempt for their occupation, and indeed for industry in every form but that of war. Of his habits of domestic life they knew little, but

of theirs he knew nothing; and, as his power over them was absolute, he was often cruel from sheer ignorance, and unintentionally a tyrant. He had the sole right to give them laws, to fix the amount of their rents and taxes, to punish real or supposed offences, and to permit or forbid the accumulation of property at his pleasure. The feudal baron's dislike of industry led him to seek occupation in the chase, which he probably regarded as "the mimicry of noble war:" in order to secure the enjoyment of this exciting sport, he established the most sanguinary laws for the preservation of game, rarely inquiring how far these laws interfered with his serfs, not merely in providing for their own subsistence,—a matter on which feudal lords rarely bestowed a thought, — but even in meeting the several exactions to which they were subject for permission to till the ground. This care for the preservation of brutes, and this utter disregard for the sufferings which forest-laws and game-laws inflicted upon men, effectually prevented any kindliness of feeling between the baron and his vassals: the peasant was conscious that his means of subsistence were wantonly sacrificed for mere sport; he felt that he was subject to the capricious personal will of an individual, who could not exhibit the shadow of a moral reason for the tyranny that he exercised. Hence arose the intense hatred with which the rural population throughout Europe regarded the feudal system, and hence the fearful

retaliations exercised in every insurrection of the peasantry during the middle ages.

In France the church was frequently interposed as a protector between the lord and his vassals. It was not unusual for the same person to be chaplain to the castle and curate to the village. His double functions invested him with the office of mediator, and he generally took advantage of this position to shield and succour the distressed. Hence arose the strong attachment manifested by the French to their old ecclesiastical institutions at the time of the Reformation: a very large body of the French nobility embraced the principles of the Huguenots; but they made few converts among the middle classes, and they were thoroughly detested by the peasantry, and the general body of the population. This was not the case in England, because the Norman conquerors from the outset adopted the policy of removing the Saxon clergy, and supplying their place by priests from the Continent. The court of Rome sanctioned this preference of foreigners; it did not discover, until too late, that the spiritual allegiance of a people can only be maintained by the agency of a native clergy: in fact, England had two churches from the age of the Conquest to that of the Tudors; for it may be said that the Normans possessed the dignities and benefices, while the remnant of the Saxon clergy still ruled in the hearts of the people. The foreign ecclesiastics were regarded as allied to

the tyranny of the barons; and hence they are usually represented in an odious light by the writers of popular ballads. Thus Robin Hood declares:

> "My chiefest spite to clergy is,
> Who in these days bear sway,
> With fryers and monks, and their fine sprunks,
> I make my chiefest prey."*

But this same Robin Hood was the firm protector of the Saxon friar Tuck, who plays such a conspicuous part in all the gallant outlaw's legends. The Saxon monks of Glastonbury resisted by force of arms the attempt of their Norman abbot to introduce a new liturgy, and were supported in their struggle by the neighbouring peasants; and, finally, the Saxons, without any authority from Rome, canonized as saints those champions of their race who had been most distinguished for their resistance to the foreign aristocracy.

Isolation was the necessary characteristic of a feudal baron: every fief was a complete state within itself, and self-regulated in the administration of justice, the levying of taxes, and the establishment of laws. It is true that the holder of a fief recognized a superior lord or suzerain, to whom he was bound for homage, allegiance, and military service; but the performance of these duties depended simply on the power of the suzerain to enforce the obligations.

* Evans' Old Ballads, Historical and Romantic.

Many authors have described the reciprocal rights and duties between the different suzerains and their vassals as a series of graduated links, extending from the monarch through all the ranks of subinfeudation to the meanest subject; so that no one was completely isolated, and yet each possessed greater freedom of individual action than was possible under any other system. But this organization was never real or efficacious; the elements of a feudal society, that is to say, the possessors of fiefs, were by their nature and position opposed to every principle of order and unity. When sovereignty and landed property were united in the same individual, the services rendered to the lord were personal; they had no reference to the state, the nation, or the monarch: with other lords similarly circumstanced the owner of a fief held the position of an ally or of an enemy, but in either case he was completely independent. Even the alliances made between neighbours for the purpose of mutual defence almost universally took the form of feudal submission: one of the contracting parties gave to the other a castle or a grant of land, under the condition of fealty and homage; by which means their mutual engagements were placed under the sanction of honour and religion. Homage, instead of being deemed a degrading ceremony, was, in fact, the characteristic of men of rank; every owner of a fief was a gentleman, though he owned but a few acres of land, and furnished but a slender

contribution towards the equipment of a knight. In fact, no great lord was in the least degree reluctant to hold a fief under another less powerful than himself, or even from one of his own vassals, and to render him in return fealty and homage. It was not at all unusual for a count, after having received a viscount's homage for his viscounty, to render homage to him in turn for some barony which formed a part of that very viscounty. Kings themselves did not disdain to hold lands and jurisdictions under their own subjects; and the Oriflamme, which became the standard of the kings of France, was originally but the banner of a barony for which the kings were vassals to the abbey of St. Denis.*

In fact, the kings themselves were regarded rather as members of the feudal confederacy than as rulers of the state. Royalty was considered as merely a great fief, upon which all the rest depended: but for a long period this pre-eminence was merely nominal in France, for we find that several lords of Aquitaine, while they maintained the form of inscribing their public acts with a king's name, very frequently inserted the name of a sovereign who had been for some years deceased; so little concern had they with the monarchy, that it seemed an unnecessary trouble to ascertain who was really the possessor of the throne. In the midst of petty independent principalities, held together by such

* Sismondi, Hist. des Franc. iv. 23.

feeble ties of confederation, we may not unreasonably be surprised that some one, more powerful than the rest, did not triumph over each in succession and establish one great monarchy. This, however, was rendered impossible by the state of military science at the time: a knight in complete armour was all but invulnerable, and a fortified castle was deemed impregnable. It is only possible to found great monarchies where the art of attack has been brought to much greater perfection than the art of defence: but in the middle ages all the disadvantages were on the side of the assailants; the baron who had once fortified his castle might bid defiance to the most powerful enemies.*

From the eleventh to the thirteenth century the multiplication of castles went on with increasing progression; and there was a constant struggle between those who felt the want of such places of defence, and those whose interests were menaced by their erection. Not only the kings, but the great feudatories, endeavoured to prevent the construction of castles on the fiefs, for they felt that a strong-hold afforded the means of independence and protracted resistance. The powerful, who wished to retain such exclusive advantages, and the feeble, who had no similar means of protection, saw these embattled edifices rising around them. A letter is extant from Fulbert bishop of Chartres, written about the year 1020, addressed

* Guizot, Hist. de la Civil. en France, iv. 52.

to Robert king of France, complaining of the erection of two castles by the viscount of Châteaudun in the vicinity of the church-lands.* The worthy prelate declares that the menacing event had filled him and the clergy with such horror as to induce them to forbid "their bells to be rung and their mass to be sung" as heretofore; and that the holy offices were celebrated with fear and trembling, and almost in silence. "Consider," he says, "whether you can devise any means for delivering us from our sufferings, and turning our sorrow into joy: use your influence with count Eudes,† and enjoin him by your royal authority to give the necessary orders, in all sincerity, for destroying these edifices, which have been built at the instigation of the devil; entreat him by the love of God, by his fidelity to you, by his reverence for the blessed Virgin, and by his affection to us, who have always adhered steadfastly to his cause. If you do not put an end to this evil, which brings all kinds of confusion into our land, what will remain for us but to interdict formally the celebration of public worship in our diocese, and with heavy hearts to seek some place of exile, for we can no longer witness or endure the sufferings of the church of God?"

Royalty was all but annihilated by feudalism

* Guizot, ubi suprà, p. 154.

† Eudes, count of Chartres, was the immediate suzerain of the offending viscount, but was himself the vassal of the king.

in France, but William the Conqueror was enabled by a variety of circumstances to set aside many feudal ordinances which trammelled the authority of the monarch. His greatest innovation was receiving the fealty of all the landholders in England, whether they held from himself in chief, or were vassals to his feudatories; which was manifestly a violation of the principle that a vassal's fealty was due to the person from whom he held the land, and to no other.* Many of the French

* In the performance of homage according to strict feudal principles, the vassal, in promising absolute obedience to his immediate lord, made no reservation whatever. William the Conqueror introduced the clause by which the vassal reserved his allegiance to the country. The following is the form of English homage as given in Littleton's Tenures: "When the tenant shall make homage to his lord, he shall be ungirt, and his head uncovered; and his lord shall sit, and the tenant shall kneel before him on both his knees, and hold his hands jointly together between the hands of his lord, and shall say thus, 'I become your man from this day forward, of life and limb, and of earthly worship; and unto you shall be true and faithful; and bear to you faith for the tenements that I claim to hold of you, saving the faith that I owe unto our sovereign lord the king.' And then the lord so sitting shall kiss him."

The following is Littleton's account of fealty: "When a freeholder doth fealty to his lord, he shall hold his right handupon a book, and say thus, 'Know ye this, my lord, that I shall be faithful and true unto you, and faith to you shall bear for the lands which I claim to hold of you; and that I shall lawfully do to you the customs and services which I ought to do as the terms assigned: so help me God and the saints!' And he shall kiss the book; but he shall not kneel when he maketh his fealty, nor shall make such humble reverence as aforesaid in homage." From this it appears, that tenure by homage was the more ho-

nobles, as for instance the duke of Normandy, were more powerful than the monarch in wealth, extent of territory, and military force: when they pleased to withhold their feudal services, the sovereign had rarely the means of enforcing their performance. The Norman Conqueror took good care to secure for himself a power that none of his vassals could venture to encounter: the estates granted to them were situated in different counties, and did not, as in France, form compact territories; those who had possessions in Normandy were restrained by dread of forfeiture in one country or the other, for success against the sovereign could scarcely be expected in both; and, besides, William had reserved for his own share more than a thousand manors, the lordship of the principal towns, and the nomination to the offices of state and administration of justice, which in those days meant the power of selling them to the highest bidder. He had thus a large revenue independent of his vassals, and was enabled to establish and maintain the feudal subordination to the monarch, which in France was merely nominal.

"A feudal kingdom," says Sir James Macintosh, "was a confederacy of a numerous body of lords,

nourable, and tenure by fealty the more sacred compact. Homage could only be done to the suzerain; fealty might be done before his deputy. Finally, none but free men could do homage; but the villeins, or serfs, might be called on to perform fealty.

who lived in a state of war against each other, and of rapine towards all mankind; in which the king, according to his ability and vigour, was either a cipher or a tyrant, and a great portion of the people were reduced to personal slavery."* It might be added, that, where the king was a cipher, he naturally sought the aid of the church or the people, or both, as a counterpoise to the usurpations of the nobles; and that, on the contrary, where the authority of the king was excessive, the barons were forced to look for aid from the people. Generally speaking, this difference between the relative strength of the monarchy and aristocracy may be taken as characteristic of the feudal system in France and in England. Feudalism triumphed in France in spite of the sovereign, and treated royalty as a vanquished enemy; feudalism was established in England by the sovereign, who took good care to give royalty preponderating weight in the system. In the former country the people sided with the monarchy, as the only means of escape from aristocratic oppression; in the latter the nobility sought the aid of the people, to save themselves from despotism.

Many other circumstances tended greatly to modify feudalism in England: the Norman monarchs, and the early Plantagenets, were fondly attached to their continental possessions,—we have seen that Henry II. risked the kingdom of Ireland for

* History of England, i. 116.

the sake of some petty towns and districts in Guienne;—the feudal relations of the French provinces to the crown of France, to the inferior vassals, and to the neighbouring great lords, were confused, complicated, and inconsistent; hence the kings of England were engaged in constant wars for objects which had no interest for the landholders of England. They were naturally reluctant to go beyond the seas, and leave their estates exposed to the hazard of an insurrection of their serfs, the ravages of the Scots and Welch, or the usurpations of a more powerful neighbour. Hence the custom of compounding for personal service by the payment of sums of money, under the name of "scutages," was very early introduced. Scutages are first distinctly mentioned in the reign of Henry II., when that monarch levied an army to prosecute his claim on the county of Toulouse; but such commutations for personal service rapidly multiplied. They enabled the monarch to levy an army better disciplined, more obedient, and infinitely more efficient than a body of feudal retainers, whose services were limited to forty days; and they permitted the barons to strengthen themselves at home and protect their property. But it was soon discovered that the possession of a mercenary army immensely increased the power of the king, and placed the disobedient barons at his mercy. The continental associations of the English monarchs, had another and more marked effect; they led

them to fill their courts with foreign favourites, whom they could enrich only by despoiling their English subjects; the descendants of the Norman conquerors had reason to dread that they might be despoiled of their estates as iniquitously as they had taken them from the Saxons, and they exclaimed against the intrusion of foreigners with a violence which led both themselves and others to forget that they were little better than intruders in their first origin. This jealousy, almost amounting to hatred of foreign ministers and advisers, had a very powerful influence in uniting the Norman barons and the Saxon people against the power of the kings. Some traces of this approximation are found in the reign of Stephen, whose attachment to foreigners was the principal cause of his failure to secure the inheritance of the throne for his family.

Feudalism became an intolerable grievance so soon as it lost its military character. Whilst the nobles depended for defence on the personal service of their vassals, they had strong motives to show them favour for the purpose of securing their attachment; and these were sufficiently powerful to prevent the exercise of wanton cruelty, save in some rare instances: but when the lords had no longer need of soldiers, when the growing power of the state put an end to private wars, the passions which could no longer be vented on rivals were indulged against dependents,

and the cruelties of the landlords provoked perilous insurrections both in France and England.

We are often liable to be misled by the use of the phrase "Feudal system;" because we attribute to a system some fixed order and arrangement, a harmonious organization of parts, and an absence of glaring inconsistencies. In such a sense, feudalism never existed as a system; its history is full of anomalies, contradictions, and violations of every principle on which it can be supposed to have rested. This is particularly evident in French history: during the period when the feudal confederacy flourished in its strength, there was scarcely any such thing as positive law; diplomacy took the place of legislation; the sovereign power treated with the subordinate powers on the basis of mutual independence, and the terms of the treaty were arranged according to the circumstances of the time and the convenience of the parties. No effort was made to form these varying and inconsistent usages into a system until feudalism itself was almost on the point of extinction; and hence its advocates and its opponents may equally find arguments in the mass of isolated facts for supporting their respective theories, and even the most cautious writer on the subject can scarcely avoid falling into apparent contradictions.

The history of the papacy in the middle ages is not less irregular and perplexed than that of feudalism;

contradictory facts meet us everywhere, and the only way in which we can account for the incoherence and confusion is, that no fixed rule was followed. We find national churches asserting their independence, defying the pope if he claimed more than fraternal regard from their prelates, and menacing him with a retort of his excommunications: in a few months, or years, we find these same churches enjoining obedience to the supreme pontiff, whom "God had invested with the primacy of the entire world." At one time, popes are obliged to yield to sovereigns; at another, the sovereigns are crouching at the feet of the pontiffs. Towards the close of the ninth century, the papacy seems to have first become conscious of its intellectual strength; and it then began to advance ambitious pretences, even when most deficient in the physical means of enforcing them. The first and most legitimate object at which the papal council aimed, was to secure free election for the popes, and put an end to the interference of the German emperors and the Italian aristocracy. The empire during the reigns of the Othos was, in general, too strong for the papacy; the imperial power was therefore conciliated by submission, and its assistance obtained in checking the inordinate power of the Italian aristocracy, more especially the counts of Tusculum. A brief summary of the events by which the German emperors were brought into intimate connection with Italian politics is

necessary before entering on the history of the great struggle for supremacy between them and the popes.

Italy, in the commencement of the tenth century, was the most unfortunate country in the world: its southern provinces were incessantly harassed by the Saracens; the rest of the peninsula was a vast field of battle in which a number of petty tyrants fought for sovereignty. These dissensions were fomented by the popes, and were perpetuated by the turbulent disposition of the Italians, who were always desirous to have two masters, that they might have a pretence for obeying neither. After several revolutions of little importance, Hugh count of Arles was elected king of Italy, and was solemnly crowned at Pavia by the archbishop of Milan. John X., who was at this time pontiff, owed his elevation to the influence of Theodora, the concubine of the count of Tuscany, a woman of the most infamous character, whose intrigues with several successive popes and with many nobles and prelates were the scandal of the age. She chose John as her paramour when he was but a simple presbyter, and obtained for him, as the purchase of her favours to others, first the bishopric of Bologna, and afterwards the archiepiscopal see of Ravenna. Her possession of the castle of St. Angelo gave her such influence in Rome, that, when vacancy was made by the death of Lando, she was enabled

to procure for her favoured lover the succession to the chair of St. Peter. It appears that Theodora had both a sister and a daughter named Marozia, both of whom were as profligate as herself; and much confusion has arisen from the one being frequently confounded with the other.*

It is no very agreeable task, and, fortunately, it is not necessary for our purpose, to examine the greater or less degree of incestuous intercourse which characterized the intrigues of these abandoned women. Marozia, the daughter of Theodora, obtained possession of the castle of St. Angelo, according to some authorities, by marriage with the proprietor, who bequeathed it to her on his deathbed; according to others, as a reward for her favours to pope Sergius III., by whom she had a son, whom she had sufficient interest at a subsequent period to raise to the papacy under the title of John XI. Her influence and her possessions, notwithstanding the infamy of her character, rendered her a desirable match to the ambitious nobles of Italy, who were all familiar with profligacy; but she chose for her second husband Vido, the marquis of Tuscany, the half-brother of count Hugh the newly elected king of Italy. If we may credit

* This, at least, is the only clue we can find through the labyrinth of inconsistencies in the contemporary writers and in the ecclesiastical historians; the latter, indeed, naturally hurry over a period so scandalous to the papacy, and so destructive to the claims of the pontiffs as successors of the Apostles.

some of the contemporary writers, who, however, rather insinuate than state the circumstance, she was guilty of gross indecency in making such a choice, as Vido's father had been one of her mother's avowed protectors. Marozia and Vido were zealous supporters of Hugh's claim to the crown of Italy, and the lady is said not to have been scrupulous in the means which she employed for winning over to the same side the princes and prelates of Rome.

Hugh also obtained the favour of the emperor of Germany and the doge of Venice: still further to strengthen himself, he sought an alliance with the emperor of Constantinople, selecting as his ambassador the father of that Luitprand whose curious account of a similar legation has been given in the preceding volume.* Amongst other presents of great value, the ambassador took with him two large mastiffs, which had nearly done great injury; for the dogs, when brought into the court, irritated by the unusual appearance of the Greek imperial dress, flew fiercely upon the emperor, and were with difficulty prevented from tearing him to pieces. In spite of this strange accident, the emperor Romanus received the envoy very kindly; his favour having been won by the present which was made him of several Sclavonian chiefs, who had attempted to pillage the ambassador, but had been conquered and taken prisoners by his escort.

* Page 402.

Marozia had never been on good terms with her mother's favourite, pope John X.: she instigated her husband to attack the pontiff; and Vido, who was in all things submissive to her will, prepared for a sacrilegious exploit, such as even in those tumultuous days most men would have shrunk from with horror. Whilst John was celebrating worship in the church of the Lateran, a body of armed men rushed in, slew the pope's brother and several of the congregation who attempted resistance, and carried John a prisoner to the castle of St. Angelo. Here he was thrown into a dungeon, and after a few days was either strangled or suffocated. Vido did not long survive his victory: at his death he bequeathed the duchy of Tuscany to his brother Lambert, a circumstance which appears to have equally displeased and disappointed his widow.

Marozia was not disposed to continue long in the state of widowhood; she offered her hand to Hugh, who was, as has been already stated, the half-brother of her former husband, promising to ensure him the possession of Rome as her dowry. The proffer was accepted, and this incestuous marriage was celebrated with a publicity which seemed designed to set public opinion at defiance. A trifling incident led to a new revolution: Alberic, Marozia's son by a former husband, was induced by his mother to act as a page to count Hugh at one of the great entertainments given in honour of the nuptials; the young man performed his services so reluctantly

or so awkwardly, that, when he was pouring out water for his new father to wash his hands, Hugh, provoked by his manner, struck him in the face. Enraged at this affront, Alberic quitted the castle: he went amongst the Romans, reproaching them for submitting to a barbarous Burgundian, whose only claim to their allegiance arose from an incestuous marriage, and incited them to take arms against the intruder. His words had such an effect, that they at once declared Alberic their consul and patrician, collected all the force of the city, and laid siege to the castle. Hugh, who was unprepared for resistance, contrived to make his escape; and the Romans, as if they had some intention of asserting their ancient liberties, revived the magistracies of the ancient republic. Alberic, however, was absolute lord of the city; and, to confirm his power, he contrived to have his natural brother, John XI., the son of Marozia by pope Sergius, elected successor to Stephen VII., whose reign was of brief duration. It is uncertain whether Marozia exerted her influence on this occasion; most probably all her power had passed into the hands of Alberic, for from this time her name disappears from history.

Hugh fled from Rome to Pavia, where he associated his son Lothaire with himself in the kingdom of Italy; having previously obtained for him the hand of Adelaide, daughter of Rodolph king of Burgundy, who was thus induced to withdraw his

claims to the Italian crown. After a vain attempt to recover Rome, Hugh became reconciled to Alberic, and gave him his daughter in marriage. A formidable competitor for the kingdom of Italy appeared in the person of Berenger, or Berengarius, marquis of Ivrea, who took advantage of widespread disaffection to revive the claims of his family to that title. Hugh, attributing the success of this rival to his own personal unpopularity, retired into a monastery, where he spent the rest of his days in prayer and penitence. Lothaire was soon after poisoned by Berengarius, who then caused himself to be solemnly crowned at Verona.

Adelaide, the widow of Lothaire, held possession of Pavia: Berengarius, anxious to obtain possession of that city, and at the same time conciliate the princess, offered her his son as a second husband. The offer was indignantly rejected; upon which, Berengarius marched against Pavia, surprised the city, took Adelaide prisoner, and caused her to be closely confined in the castle of Garda. By the assistance of her confessor, the princess made her escape, and found shelter in the castle of Canoza. Berengarius, having vainly demanded that the lady should be surrendered to him, laid siege to Canoza; but Adelaide had sent for aid to the emperor of Germany, offering Otho her hand and her claims on the kingdom of Italy as the price of her deliverance. Otho immediately accepted the terms: the siege of Canoza was raised at his approach; his

marriage with Adelaide was celebrated; and Berengarius was compelled to resign a great part of his dominions, and to do homage for the rest to the emperor of Germany. It is disputed whether he was permitted to retain the title of king.

Otho's return to Germany was the signal for Berengarius to renew his ambitious enterprizes; he ravaged the territories of those who had abandoned him with the greatest barbarity, and menaced Rome itself with destruction. Alberic's faction was so powerful in Rome, that it was enabled to raise to the papacy his natural son Octavian, a youth about sixteen years of age, whose early profligacy had been the scandal of the city. Octavian, who held his father's title and power of consul, refused to surrender his political character when he assumed the papacy under the name of John XII. Berengarius was the bitter enemy of the new pontiff, who had interfered to prevent him from obtaining the duchy of Spoleto: he prepared to punish the disappointment; but John wrote the most pressing letters to Otho, entreating him, "for the love of God and His holy Apostles, to come and deliver the Roman church from the claws of the monster that was tearing it in pieces." Otho, believing himself sufficiently strong to master Italy and the pope, crossed the Alps, deposed Berengarius, placed the iron crown of Lombardy on his own head, and shortly after was crowned by the pope emperor of the West. He

made a noble use of his power; but the fatal example of uniting Germany with Italy was given, and his German successors looked upon that as a right, which had been originally a concession on the part of the people.

John soon revolted against the emperor; but Otho promptly returned to Rome, summoned a council, in which John, having been pronounced guilty of the most atrocious crimes, was solemnly deposed, and Leo VIII. was elected in his stead. Scarcely, however, had Otho gone back to Germany, when Leo was deposed in his turn, and John recalled by the very prelates who had convicted him of every atrocity by which human nature can be disgraced. The emperor was not a prince to endure such treatment: he made immediate preparations for a new campaign in Italy; but, before he crossed the Alps, John had fallen a victim to the jealousy of an outraged husband. The turbulent Romans elected Benedict V. as his successor; on Otho's approach, however, the new pontiff hasted to lay down the ensigns of his brief dignity at Leo's feet, and supplicated pardon for his usurpation. Otho took advantage of these favourable circumstances to procure for himself and his successors the right of nominating the sovereign of Italy, of confirming the election of popes, and of giving investiture to bishops.

After the death of this great emperor, Italy

once more fell into confusion, and Rome especially was the scene of fresh revolutions and fresh crimes. Crescentius, the son of pope John X. by Theodora,—a man richly endowed with courage and eloquence,—resolved to restore the ancient independence of Rome, and render the city independent both of the papacy and of the empire. The Italian nobles aimed at securing the nomination of the popes for themselves; and a few members of the conclave secretly formed plans for restoring the freedom of the church. A scene of anarchy ensued, which lasted more than a quarter of a century, until Otho III., the grandson of Otho the Great, conferred the papacy on one of his relatives, who took the title of Gregory V., and promised to support him with all the forces of the empire. Crescentius made a last effort to overthrow German supremacy: he entered into a treaty with the emperors of Constantinople; and, to gratify the Byzantine court, drove Gregory from Rome, and placed a Greek bishop on the papal throne. Otho immediately returned to Rome, which made but a feeble defence; he deprived the intrusive pope of sight, and, having got Crescentius into his power by a promise of pardon, caused the last of the consuls to be put to death by the most cruel tortures. It is said that Otho compelled the widow of Crescentius to become his mistress; and that, after having for many years sought an opportunity for avenging her own wrongs

and the treacherous murder of her husband, she at length destroyed the emperor by poison.

No prelate ever lived in more feudal dependence on a sovereign than Gregory V. on the German emperor; but he atoned for this degradation by exercising a cruel despotism over the kings of France. The Capets, whose throne was not yet secured by long possession, were forced to have their title confirmed by papal authority, and they were obliged to purchase this favour by implicit submission. Even Hugh the Great, after having deposed the traitor Arnold from the archbishopric of Rheims, and given the see to the celebrated Gerbert, (afterwards pope Sylvester II.,) the most learned man of the age, was forced to see his authority set at defiance, and Arnold restored by papal interference. The superstitious Robert, who succeeded Hugh on the throne of France, had married his cousin Bertha; and, to obtain the consent of Gregory to a marriage within the prohibited degrees, had not only re-established Arnold, but sent Gerbert out of his dominions. Unfortunately for the French monarch, Gerbert found refuge at the imperial court, and soon became such a favourite with the emperor, that he obtained the archbishopric of Ravenna, and was strongly recommended to the favour of the pope. Thus Gregory, so far from being conciliated, was rendered more hostile to the king: he declared the marriage illegal in solemn conclave; and, when

Robert refused to part with his wife, he denounced against him a fearful anathema.* He further suspended the archbishop of Tours, who had celebrated the marriage, and all the bishops who had recognized its validity, until they should make satisfaction to the Holy See.

The history of the period is so confused that we cannot discover with any certainty how long Robert's resistance was protracted. Fifty years afterwards, the clergy seized on the circumstances of the divorce to terrify other sovereigns and nations into obedience to the Holy See. Cardinal St. Peter Damian gave the following version of the story in a letter to the abbot of Monte-Cassino, for the purpose of showing the emperor Henry IV., who was descended from Robert in the female line, the dangers he incurred by resisting the edicts of the Vatican: "The grandfather of this monarch, Robert, king of the Gauls, married a lady related to him within the prohibited degrees, and she bore him a son who had the neck and head of a goose!

* This anathema was couched in the following terms: "May the king and queen be cursed in the city and country! May their children, their lands, and their flocks, be cursed with them! May their bowels burst like those of the impious Arius! May all the curses pronounced by Moses against impostors fall upon their head! May they be overwhelmed with all the horrors of eternal death! Let no Christian salute them when he meets them! Let no priest say mass before them, or confess them, or give them the communion, even at the hour of death, unless they repent! Let them have no burial than that of asses, in order that they may be an example of disgrace and malediction to the present and all future generations!"

Nearly all the bishops of Gaul with one consent excommunicated the incestuous husband and wife. Such terror seized the people in consequence of this sacerdotal edict, that everybody fled from the king's society, and there only remained two little slaves to supply him with food. Even they believed that the vessels in which the king had eaten or drunk were so polluted, that, immediately after he had used them, they broke them and threw the fragments into the flames. It was in consequence of this state of suffering that Robert, returning to wiser councils, dissolved this incestuous union and contracted a legal marriage."*

In an evil hour for himself and his kingdom did Robert contract this new marriage. His second wife was Constantia, daughter of the count of Provence, a lady of no great personal charms, but remarkable for her arrogance, her ambition, and her licentious passion. She openly avowed her contempt for the feeble Robert and the puerilities of superstitious devotion in which he spent the greater part of his time. It is recorded, that, when he gave alms to a pilgrim or beggar, he used to caution the object of his charity to take heed lest he should be discovered by the queen. Helgald, the monk of Fleury, who relates several anecdotes curiously illustrative of the simplicity and grossness of the age, declares that, when he wanted money, he did not hesitate to give the royal ornaments to the

* Petri Damiani Epistolæ, lib. ii. 15.

poor; and, when the queen inquired the cause of their absence, he used to swear solemnly that he knew nothing about them.*

The worthy monk clearly believed that the charity was a full and sufficient atonement for the perjury. Indeed, the following passage will show that his notions of the obligations of veracity were very different from those inculcated in the New Testament. "The king," he says, "had the greatest possible horror of falsehood: he, therefore, caused a shrine to be prepared, ornamented with gold, but took care to place no holy relic within; and on this empty shrine he used to swear those who came to perjure themselves, in order to save both them and himself from guilt! And, for the same reason that he used this shrine for princes and nobles unacquainted with his pious fraud, he employed an ostrich's egg in administering oaths to the common people."† This curious illustration of Robert's reverence for truth appeared so truly noble to the monastic biographer, that he bursts into a long rhapsody of admiration, and ends with the following quotation: "Who shall ascend unto the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of

* Helgaldi Epit. vitæ Roberti regis, cap. viii.

† Helgaldi, ut antè.

his salvation."* It is clear that both Helgald and the king believed that an oath taken upon false relics would not bind the conscience, and might be violated with impunity. We have already seen another proof of the prevalence of this belief, in the artifice by which William of Normandy induced Harold to bind himself by a stronger obligation than he had originally intended.†

As the simplicity and weakness of Robert, united to the general superstition of the times, were the chief causes that enabled the papacy to maintain its supremacy over France, while it was itself in subjection to the Germanic empire, it can scarcely be deemed a digression if we select one or two anecdotes more, which tend equally to illustrate that monarch's character, and also to show the nature of the virtues which, in the eleventh century, monks and ecclesiastics made the theme of extravagant adulation. During a magnificent banquet which the king gave at Etampes in honour of Constantia, a poor man crawled under the table and lay at the feet of the king, who fed him from his own plate. The ungrateful beggar, however, took advantage of his position to detach from the king's robes an ornament called the "label," which was of pure gold, and weighed more than six ounces. Robert pretended not to notice it, and the thief escaped with his booty. After the entertainment was over and the company dispersed, Con-

* Psalm xxiv. 3-5. † See vol. i. p. 338.

stantia discovered the loss of the "label," and furiously demanded of her husband why he had permitted himself to be robbed. Robert replied, "Doubtless, the poor fellow who took it had more need of it than I." The queen, however, was not so easily satisfied, and she bestowed upon her husband every opprobrious epithet that a woman's indignation could suggest.

On another occasion, whilst the king was engaged in his devotions, kneeling before the altar in some cathedral, a thief stole behind him and cut off half the fringe of gold which adorned the royal mantle. He was proceeding to take more, when Robert turned round, and said in a gentle tone, "You had better, my friend, leave the rest for somebody else, who is likely to be in as much want of it as you are."

Even sacrilege failed to rouse the indignation of this gentle and beneficent sovereign. One day, during the solemn service of the church, he saw an ecclesiastic, named Ogger, whom he had appointed one of his chaplains, approach the altar, and, after having removed a taper from its silver candlestick, hide the precious utensil in the folds of his robe. When the other ministers, who had the charge of the church plate, discovered the robbery, they were filled with consternation: they asked the king if he had seen any one remove it; he at once answered in the negative. They next applied to the queen: she flew into a rage, and

swore by the soul of her father that she would pull out the eyes of all who had charge of the church, and cause them to be put to death with the most excruciating torments, unless the candlestick was restored and the thief detected. Robert was seriously alarmed, for he knew that in any act of cruelty the queen was certain to keep her word: he sent privately to Ogger, informed him that his guilt was known, and advised him to make all speed into Lorraine, his native country, in order to escape the vengeance of Constantia. He even gave him money to defray the expenses of his journey; and some days after, when he had reason to believe that the robber was in safety, he related the circumstances of the theft to the clergy.

The last anecdote that we shall quote is one that we should more willingly have omitted, but for the singularity of finding the monarch's conduct recorded with approbation by such a strenuous advocate of celibacy as the monk Helgald. It was Robert's custom to rise every night, and, without summoning any of his attendants, to go into the church and offer up his devotions; after which he retired to bed. His nightly peregrinations through the palace were not suspected, and they brought him acquainted with many secrets which fortunately he was too discreet to reveal. One Easter-eve, while traversing the apartments, he found a pair of lovers, surprised by sleep in each other's arms, in so exposed a situation that they

could not possibly escape detection if any should pass that way: the generous king took off his cloak, and threw it over them; after which he proceeded to his devotions without saying a single word.

Robert's contemporary, Foulke, count of Anjou, one of the most daring warriors and robbers of the age, was probably the one whose career best illustrates those frequent alternations between outrageous sacrilege, and implicit submission to the authority of the church, with which this age abounds. His life is singularly illustrative of the hold which superstition gave ecclesiastics over the minds of the barbarous nobility, and therefore deserves to be noticed, in order to comprehend the means by which the comparative civilization of papacy and the church was enabled to maintain itself against feudal barbarism. At the instigation of Constantia, he hired twelve assassins who murdered Robert's favourite minister in the king's own presence, because he had endeavoured to check the queen's ambition. He violated the privileges of St. Martin of Tours, in order to seize some enemy who had provoked his wrath; he tore his victim from the altar, without any one daring to offer him the slightest resistance. The clergy took efficacious means for obtaining redress; they took the relics of the saints from the shrines, and laid them, together with the crucifixes, crowned with thorns, on the floor of the church. The body of the patron saint, Martin, was exposed, similarly crowned

and robed in sackcloth; the gates of the church were kept closed by night and by day, pilgrims alone being admitted. The horror produced by this proceeding alarmed the fierce count; he presented himself at the gates of the church, robed as a penitent, his head and feet naked, imploring pardon for his crime. The gates were opened; he deposited a rich offering at Martin's shrine, and made minor oblations to the other saints and to the crucifix. Having thus given satisfaction, he received absolution from Renald, bishop of Anjou, having previously made solemn oath before the prelate that he would never more violate the right of sanctuary. The count did not abstain from other crimes; he murdered his wife and burned the town of Saumur. It is recorded that, when he was setting fire to the church of St. Florence in that town, he cried to the saint, "Forgive me, most holy Florence, for setting fire to your church here, and I will build you one much finer in Angers." At length, to expiate his crimes, he became a pilgrim, and three times visited Jerusalem. It was in his second pilgrimage that he performed his celebrated penance, causing himself to be scourged before the altar by his own servants, in memory of which he ever after wore in his helmet a branch of green broom (*planta genista*), from which his posterity assumed the name of Plantagenet.

On the death of Gregory V., Otho proved himself a benefactor to Christendom by conferring the

papal dignity on Gerbert, whom Robert, as we have seen, deprived of the archbishopric of Rheims. The new pontiff took the name of Sylvester II., which he immortalized by the most tranquil and useful reign that Rome had witnessed for several centuries. Whilst yet an unknown youth, his love of learning had induced him to visit the schools established by the Saracens in Cordova, and from them he learned the principles of the exact sciences, which had fallen into oblivion in Europe. He had endeavoured, not without success, to introduce the study of arithmetic, music, and geometry into France; and, in the midst of the various political and theological controversies in which he was engaged, he never relaxed his application to the higher branches of the mechanical arts. During the time that he held the archiepiscopal see of Rheims, he constructed a clock which marked the hours; the first that had been seen in that part of Europe. William of Malmesbury further declares, that he erected an organ which was played by steam; and, though we cannot rely very implicitly on the authority of this most credulous historian, the anecdote deserves to be noticed, as a proof that the use of steam as a motive power was partially known, or at least suspected, as early as the eleventh century.

Sylvester was not popular among the Romans, and his memory has been much abused by the monkish historians. The causes of this injustice were

the boldness with which he denounced ecclesiastical abuses while in a subordinate station, and the fidelity with which he supported the imperial authority after his elevation to the papacy. That authority was, however, shaken to its foundation when the empire became elective after the death of Otho, and both the prelates and nobles of Rome were indignant at the restraint which the pope imposed on their turbulent and rebellious dispositions. His well-known skill in mechanics afforded his enemies an opportunity of representing him as a cultivator of magical arts; his extensive acquirements thus became the means of increasing the unpopularity which had been excited by his adhesion to German politics. William of Malmesbury asserts that Gerbert possessed a book which gave him command over the demons; that he obtained it from Satan himself, who added the gift of a brazen head which uttered oracles; and that the pope received a message from hell, while celebrating mass in the church of the Holy Cross, informing him that his term was out, and that he must surrender his soul according to the conditions of his bargain with the powers of evil.

The termination of the dynasty of the Othos, and the death of Sylvester, were the signals for new disorders in the papacy; the counts of Tusculum seized on the feudal supremacy which the emperors had possessed, and became masters of the throne of St. Peter. For several years this

powerful family made the supreme government of the church their heritage, or openly sold it to the highest bidder; no effort was made to remove this tyranny by the citizens of Rome, though they were engaged in continual insurrections, the only traces of their ancient freedom, which they were no longer able either to conquer or to preserve.

CHAPTER II.

Consequences of the Revolutions described in the preceding volume, continued. — Emancipation of the Papacy from Feudal servitude.—Modifications of the spirit of Barbarous Adventure. —Chivalry.—The Crusades.

All Christendom was scandalized by the degradation to which the Holy See was reduced while the papacy was held in subjection by the counts of Tusculum and the profligate nobility of Rome. A triple election of popes threatened the church with a schism, and filled Italy with confusion. Henry III., emperor of Germany, at length deemed it necessary to interfere: he assembled a council at Satri, deposed the rival popes, and elevated in their stead the bishop of Bamberg, who took the name of Clement VII. A council was assembled at Rome to remedy the disorders of the church: very severe laws were enacted against simony;* nobles were prohibited from seizing on ecclesiasti-

* The prevalence of simony at Rome was made the theme of several bitter pasquinades; the following couplet is a translation of one which was very popular:

That Peter came to Rome, I will not swear;
But Simon did, for simony is there.

cal offices; and, to put an end to the usurpations of the counts of Tusculum, all the Romans were compelled to swear that they never would proceed to the election of a pope without the permission of the emperor. On the death of Clement this oath was violated; and Benedict IX., one of the deposed popes, was restored. Henry promptly interfered: he compelled Benedict to abdicate, and conferred the papacy on Damasus II. This prelate did not long enjoy his elevation; and Henry nominated in his place Bruno, bishop of Toul, who took the name of Leo IX.

Leo was nominated by the emperor in the diet of Worms; and his appointment was therefore so purely secular, that many, who had vigorously supported Henry's ecclesiastical reformations, were dismayed to find the papacy brought so completely under the control of the state, that the head of the church was chosen by an imperial council, and not by a sacerdotal conclave. No one felt more strongly on this subject than Hildebrand, the son of a carpenter of Tuscany, who had become a monk in his early youth, and had risen to considerable influence over the monastic orders by his learning, zeal, and unswerving austerity. He was at the monastery of Cluny, in Burgundy, when Leo IX. arrived there on his road to Italy. Hildebrand well knew the character of the new pope, who was weak, credulous, and superstitious; unable to bear the weight of the power he had received, or to

comprehend the mission with which he was entrusted by the emperor. The monk received the pope with a stern aspect, reproached him in bitter terms for having violated the canons of religion by consenting to receive spiritual power from a temporal sovereign,—for being the pope of the emperor, not the pope of the church. Leo, who had accepted the emperor's kindness with reluctance, stripped off the marks of his pontifical dignity, promising not to resume them unless he was freely elected by the cardinals of Rome, to conciliate whom he immediately sent Hildebrand to act as his ambassador. The Roman clergy joyously received the monk, whose boldness had restored their privileges; Leo was unanimously re-elected, and the emperor took no notice of this open insult to his authority.

Leo, having thus quieted all scruples respecting his own election, undertook to purify the church from its simoniacal abuses: he was zealously seconded by the boldness and fervour of Hildebrand, and by the pious zeal of Peter Damian, who subsequently became as conspicuous among the saints as his colleague among the popes. In the confusion which followed the accession of the Capets, the ecclesiastical state of France had become as scandalous as its social condition was deplorable; to this country, therefore, Leo directed his earliest attention: he ordered that a general council should be

convoked at Rheims for the reformation of ecclesiastical abuses.* The simoniacal prelates, and the princes by whom they had been instituted, were filled with alarm: they applied to their sovereign, Henry I., whose reign was all but nominal; and he, at the desire of his vassals, who were really his masters, supplicated Leo to forego his intentions. The pope might have yielded, but his advisers were made of sterner stuff: they declared with truth that the remonstrance was to be regarded rather as the work of conscious delinquents than of the king; and the preparations for the journey were hastened, instead of being suspended.

Leo proceeded to Rheims at the appointed time, escorted by vast crowds from every part of France: the feeble king was induced to issue an edict forbidding the meeting; but, in spite of his prohibition, twenty prelates and fifty abbots assembled, and commenced their investigation of ecclesiastical delinquencies with a strictness and severity which had not been anticipated. Every prelate was summoned to declare on oath that he had not given any bribe to purchase his promotion. Out of the four archbishops present, three made no difficulty in giving this assurance; but, when it came to the turn of the archbishop of Rheims, he demanded time for reflection. When again pressed, he pleaded the necessity of consulting his suffragans; and, finally, he prevailed on the pope to adjourn the

* A. D. 1049.

consideration of the case until a new council should be assembled in Rome.

Amongst the sixteen bishops present, the bishop of Nevers confessed that he had purchased his see, and voluntarily gave in his resignation: the bishops of Constance and Nantes confessed that their relations had purchased their sees, but declared that they had not consented to such a simoniacal transaction: the bishop of Langres, accused, not only of simony, but of having tortured many of his clerical dependents to obtain their money, begged for a little delay, and fled from the city. He was deposed, as were also the archbishop of Sens, the bishops of Beauvais and Amiens, and the abbot of St. Medard; all of whom, conscious of their guilt, had absented themselves from the assembly. The council then turned its attention to the laity: sentence of excommunication was passed against several counts and knights, who had violated the canons of the church by simoniacal practices, incestuous marriages, and gross acts of profligacy.

During Leo's reign the principal share of the administration devolved upon Hildebrand, whose statesmanlike policy raised the papacy from the degradation into which it had fallen. His plans for rendering the Holy See independent of the empire were not yet matured; and he therefore adopted a course of policy by which the emperor was conciliated, and, at the same time, his authority weakened. Sentence of excommunication was pro-

nounced against the duke of Lorraine and the count of Flanders, who had revolted against their sovereign; but Henry did not see, that, by using papal bulls against his enemies, he was giving strength and validity to instruments which might at some future time be employed against himself. To such influence did Hildebrand attain, that, on the death of Leo, he was permitted by the emperor to nominate his successor. The powerful monk selected a German bishop, a member of the imperial family, who took the title of Victor II. No pontiff could have been more acceptable to the emperor; he believed that the new pope would aid him in his projects of ecclesiastical reformation, and also secure the confirmation of his son's election to the empire, which he had taken the precaution to have voted by the diet during his lifetime. Henry III. was soon after seized with mortal disease; he bequeathed the care of his infant son to the pope, and is said also to have recommended him to the protection of Hildebrand.

The premature death of Henry III. altered the character of the reformation he had commenced in the church. The purity of his morals, his zeal for religion, his activity and his courage, had enabled him to preserve a mastery over the clergy, whose rising ambition he had not failed to discover; his eloquence gave him a commanding influence over the diets and councils at a period when literary qualifications of any kind were rare

in a sovereign. By withdrawing the prelates from the yoke of the feudal lords, and strictly prohibiting simoniacal practices, he rendered the clergy more moral and more respected, and, as he believed, more submissive to the imperial authority. But his son and successor, Henry IV., found this new power of the clergy directed against himself, and felt sensibly that the prelates were only rendered more formidable adversaries by the regularity of their elections and the strictness of their lives.

Victor II. did not long enjoy his elevation: on his death, Hildebrand was again invested with the power of nominating a pope, and he chose the brother of Godfrey, duke of Lorraine, with the approbation of the empress-regent, Agnes. The new pontiff took the title of Stephen IX.: his brief reign was spent in arranging plans for raising his brother to the empire, instead of the child who nominally ruled; and he employed the talents of Hildebrand to lull the vigilance of the regent and the imperial court. Whilst the able monk was absent on this mission, Stephen was seized with mortal disease: when he found that the hour of his dissolution was near, he caused the clergy and people of Rome to be assembled, and exacted from them a solemn promise that they would not proceed to the election of his successor until Hildebrand had returned from Germany. The counts of Tusculum, long accustomed to regard the papacy as their inheritance, no sooner received

intelligence of Stephen's death than they collected their retainers, seized the Vatican with a chosen body of armed men, and installed one of their faction pope with the title of Benedict X. To add to the indecency of this proceeding, Benedict was so utterly ignorant that he was unable either to read or write.

Hildebrand had reached Florence on his return, when the cardinals and bishops, flying from Rome, brought him the news of this usurpation. Surprized but undismayed, he assembled the bishops and cardinals, declared that the proceedings of the counts of Tusculum were a violation of the laws of the empire, and commanded the prelates to proceed to a new election. Under the direction of Hildebrand they chose Gerard, bishop of Florence, who took the name of Nicholas III.: this choice was immediately confirmed by the imperial court, and an army commanded by the marquis of Tuscany was sent to expel the Tusculan faction from Rome. Such assistance, however, was scarcely required: the Roman populace, strongly attached to Hildebrand, threw open the gates as he approached; Nicholas entered the city in triumph, and his rival was sent to repent of his ambition in a monastery. This rapid succession of ephemeral popes did not retard the progress of pontifical power. Each election gave to the church a head more rigid and austere than his predecessor; the ambition of the pontiff, and the submission of the people, increased

in direct proportion to this display of monastic virtues; it was in fact impossible that asceticism should fail in a struggle against royal weakness and aristocratic profligacy.

Nicholas, or rather Hildebrand, who directed the pope as he pleased, commenced his reign by summoning a general council. It assembled in Rome, and an important law was proposed by which the election of the popes might be entirely liberated from the control of the imperial court. It was ordained, that, when a vacancy occurred, the cardinal-bishops should assemble to consult upon the election, assisted by the cardinals of inferior rank in the hierarchy; and that the person chosen by them should be presented for approbation to the clergy and people. By this decree the electoral college formed a new and formidable aristocracy in the church: it was a body which could not in those ages be rivalled; its members were men of learning and intelligence, who won their way to rank chiefly by the display of eminent abilities; they were zealous for the honour of their order, and they had attained an age which prevented them from risking their power by any act of rashness and imprudence. The sacerdotal monarchy thus received a constitutional organization to which it was mainly indebted for its success in the approaching struggle with the imperial power. A clause was added to the decree by which the electoral college was constituted, designed to reconcile

the emperor to this invasion of his ancient rights. "Saving," said the pope, "the honour due to our dear son Henry, now king,* and who will, please God, be emperor; the same honour shall also be accorded to his successors to whom the same rights shall have been personally granted by the Holy See."† It will be seen that this clause is so ambiguously worded as to leave it doubtful whether it gives the emperor authority over the pope, or the pope over the emperor; we shall hereafter see, that, when Hildebrand came to interpret it at a subsequent period, he left no doubt of the latter meaning being the one intended.

Another law, proposed and enacted by this council, was resisted for more than a century before it became generally established; it was a decree to enforce the celibacy of the clergy.‡ Great resist-

* The emperor-elect of Germany took the title of king of the Romans.

† Baronii Annales, ann. 1059.

‡ In 1215, the attempt to enforce celibacy in England was strongly resisted by the clergy. On this occasion Walter Mapes produced the "Convocation of the Clergy," one of the most extraordinary specimens of facility in Latin rhyming and versification which exists. We shall quote an imitation in English verse of some stanzas of this whimsical production, in which we have endeavoured to preserve the studied carelessness of the venerable archdeacon's quatrains:

A strange report to England came, and spread throughout the nation,
That wives should be prohibited to all of priestly station;
And that the pope was sending o'er a very strict legation,
To punish those who disobey'd, by instant deprivation.

Our

ance was made to the decree both in France and Italy: several of the married priests declared that wives were permitted by the general laws of the church, and others averred that their provinces were not governed by the same system of discipline as that which prevailed in Rome. Pope Nicholas, for some unknown reason, branded the disobedient clergy with the name of Nicolaitans, and employed the pen of Peter Damian to convict them of heresy. The worthy saint assailed clerical marriages in language which would in modern times have excited universal reprobation, but in his own day his grossness and indecency

Our priests, at first, believed the tale to be but idle tattle,
But soon were roused to greater heed by matrimonial prattle;
So then they vow'd, both one and all, they 'd for their wives do battle,
And heed no more a papal bull than some young infant's rattle!

A synod straightway was convoked, somewhere beside the Humber,
And thither flock'd a mighty crowd of priests beyond all number,
Both shaven heads and shorn crowns, and such monastic lumber;
But not a layman was allow'd the council to encumber.

They met in thousands: as no house could give accommodation,
A level field both broad and wide they chose for their location.
Our dean was voted to the chair by general acclamation,
And to his grieving brethren, then, he made this brief oration:

"We 've met together here, my friends, to save our darling spouses;
A nuncio has just arriv'd to turn them from our houses:
I cannot speak, as this attempt such indignation rouses;
It makes me mute as any ass on the hill-side that browses!"

One

passed as proofs of the intensity of his zeal.* Hildebrand, with equal zeal, laboured to enforce celibacy; he saw clearly that an ascetic clergy would be more easily disciplined, and formed into an independent militia, than one which was connected with the state and the country by the bonds of family and domestic affection.

Nicholas, like so many of his predecessors, enjoyed his elevation but for a very brief period: his death afforded an opportunity for testing the experiment of an electoral college, and the misconduct of the empress-regent afforded a plausible pretext for acting on the new law. The cardinals were at first reluctant to take any steps which would look like an open defiance of the imperial

One priest arose amid the crowd, which stood at first confounded,
And, looking at the faces sad by which he was surrounded,
Said, "By one wife, as you well know, my wishes have been bounded,
And I 'll not yield her to the laws this legate has propounded."

Our vicar took the second place,—you know he is no spouter;
But, when a battle 's to be fought, no champion can be stouter:
Said he, "You know I 've got a wife; I cannot do without her:
And that, my friends, is all the speech I mean to make about her."

A third priest then arose, and said, "I must confess with shame, sirs!
That once a hundred concubines upon me had a claim, sirs!
But now I am contented with a single buxom dame, sirs!
And I would not for a purse of gold be parted from the same, sirs!"

* See some specimens, which even under the veil of a learned language we are unwilling to extract, in the Annals of Baronius sub ann. 1059.

court; they therefore deputed Stephen, one of their number, to go to the empress Agnes and consult with her on supplying the vacancy. Agnes kept cardinal Stephen waiting several days without admitting him to an audience; his patience was at length exhausted, and he returned to Italy. Hildebrand, who was now a cardinal-deacon, induced the rest of the conclave to regard the conduct of the empress as an insult to their order: the college assembled without any further reference to the imperial court, elected Anselm, bishop of Lucca, and crowned him by the name of Alexander II. Agnes was violently enraged when she received intelligence of these proceedings; she summoned a council at Basil, and chose as a rival pope the bishop of Parma, whom she had consecrated by the German prelates under the name of Honorius II. A schism was thus produced, and the two parties wrote, preached, and blasphemed against each other with more than usual bitterness: indeed, to the passions awakened during the contest may fairly be ascribed the outbreak of fanaticism at the close of the eleventh century.

Had the empress possessed the talents and influence of her late husband, she would probably have triumphed in the contest; for the reverence in which the imperial power was held, had not yet begun to decline: but she provoked the jealousy of the prelates and nobles by confining her attentions exclusively to the bishop of Augsburg, who was

believed to be her gallant as well as her minister. A conspiracy was formed to remove her son from her charge: she was invited to bring the young monarch to a splendid entertainment at Kaiserwerth on the Rhine, given under the superintendence of Hanno, archbishop of Cologne. Henry, who was about twelve years of age, was taken by the archbishop to walk in the gardens on the banks of the river. They remarked a beautiful boat approaching the shore; and the young monarch, with the natural curiosity of boyhood, expressed a wish to go on board in order to examine it more closely. This was what the archbishop desired; and no sooner were they on board than he gave the signal to the boatmen to row to the opposite bank of the river with all their might. Henry earnestly besought them to restore him to his mother; and, when his appeals failed, jumped overboard in order to escape by swimming. He would have been drowned, had not the count of Brunswick leaped after him, and brought him back to the boat. The conspirators brought the young prince to Cologne, and there agreed that his personal guardianship should be entrusted to the bishop of that diocese in which he should at any time reside: they laboured also successfully to reconcile him to the change, and to alienate his affections from his mother. Agnes, deserted by all her former supporters, retired to the court of her brother the duke of Aquitaine; but, being very coolly re-

ceived, she went to Rome to kneel for pardon to the pope: she obtained absolution, but was forced to spend the rest of her life immured in a convent. Honorius protracted the struggle for a few years; but his cause rapidly sunk, he died in obscurity, despised and forgotten.

We have already noticed the most important event of Alexander's reign,—his sanction of the Norman conquest of England.* It must be observed that this was not the only instance in which the spirit of military adventure was stimulated by religious zeal; both had early in the eleventh century kindled the fanaticism which was soon to burst forth in the crusades. Hildebrand set the example of preaching that no offering was more acceptable to God than the blood of infidels; the monks emulously adopted the theme, and the descendants of the sea-kings were gratified by incentives to pious privateering and sanctified robbery. The rich stuffs manufactured by the Saracens in Spain were eagerly coveted by the nobles and knights of France and Normandy, but they had not always the means of purchasing such gorgeous robes; and they heard with pleasure from the pulpit that it would be an acceptable deed of devotion to seize these coveted ornaments in the places where they were manufactured, and pay for them by slaughtering the producers. William VI., duke of Aquitaine, published an invitation to all

* See vol. i. p. 346.

the knights and adventurers in southern and western France to join themselves as volunteers in an expedition against the Moors of Spain, which he had resolved to undertake "for the love of God, and the glory of His holy church." He soon assembled a gallant army, with which he crossed the Pyrenees, attacked the city of Balbastro on the frontiers of Aragon and Catalonia, took it by storm, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. The recklessness with which the adventurers wasted their provisions soon exposed them to famine: after suffering the greatest hardships, William was forced to abandon his conquests and return to France.*

In less than a year this adventure was followed by another, which had still more the character of a crusade, and may, indeed, be regarded as the precursor of these wars. In the beginning of the year 1064, it was publicly announced throughout Western Europe that several of the principal prelates of Germany, including the archbishop of Mayence, the bishops of Bamberg, Ratisbon, and Utrecht, with some others, were preparing for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; and that they would receive into their company all knights who were willing to shed their blood for the sake of Jesus Christ. Pilgrims flocked together from all parts of Germany and France: thirty knights and priests formed the contingent from Normandy. When all were assembled, it was found that the army of pilgrims

* Sigeberti Chron. ann. 1063.

amounted to seven thousand men: but numbers were the least part of its attraction; every noble and knight who had joined the expedition had spent the greater part of his fortune in the decorations of his horse and armour.

The pilgrims traversed with little difficulty those countries in which the crusaders were destined to endure much difficulty and suffer much loss: they took their road along the valley of the Danube through Austria and Hungary; after which they turned into the Byzantine dominions, where they were most hospitably entertained by Constantine Ducas, the reigning emperor of Constantinople. Having been transported across the Bosphorus, they entered the districts of ancient Lyria; and here their difficulties began. The gorgeous display of pomp which they maintained excited the cupidity of the savage mountaineers of Anatolia, and they had every day to fight some new horde of robbers. They still went dauntlessly forward, but fame had conveyed an exaggerated report of their wealth to the Bedouins of Syria; and no sooner had the pilgrims crossed the frontiers of Palestine than they were attacked by several confederate tribes, and forced to seek shelter in a ruined fortress, destitute of all kinds of provisions. Here they were closely besieged for three days, suffering the worst extremes of hunger and thirst; but, fortunately for them, an emír in the neighbourhood, who was at war with the Bedouins, came to their

assistance, and agreed for a stipulated sum to convey them safely to Jerusalem. After having accomplished their pilgrimage, they embarked on board some Genoese galleys, and were conveyed safely to the south of Italy: but of seven thousand men, who set out on horseback, in brilliant panoply, confiding in their youth, their strength, and their valour, not more than two thousand returned home, on foot, exhausted, and covered with rags.*

Hildebrand clearly saw that the reformation of the church was essential to its supremacy; no man ever exhibited a more thorough conviction that purity of morals, and a display of striking virtues, were certain means of obtaining power in an age of vice and profligacy. Under his direction, pope Alexander essayed several reforms: he attacked the purchase and sale of benefices with the most fervent zeal; and, with a degree of boldness as yet unprecedented, cited the emperor himself to appear before his tribunal, on a charge of having illegally usurped the property of the church. This daring challenge to the imperial power excited universal attention; it was obvious that the struggle for supremacy between feudalism and the papacy was about to take place, and men prepared themselves for determining what part they should take in the approaching contest. The death of Alexander at this important juncture hastened the

* See Ingulf, abbot of Croyland, ad ann. 1064.

crisis. Hildebrand, who had hitherto been the secret guide of the papacy, now put himself forward as its ostensible head: he was elected pope, with the title of Gregory VII.; and he assumed the government with somewhat of the same feelings as might be supposed to animate an able general, who came to place himself at the head of his army when all his preparations were complete for opening a brilliant campaign.

At the accession of Gregory VII., the European monarchs had to maintain their sovereignty against the arms of turbulent vassals, always disinclined to submit to the least restraint; and against an ecclesiastical monarchy, which claimed a divine right to supremacy over all other forms of dominion. This triple struggle between the despotism of sovereigns, the tyranny of feudalism, and the ambition of the priesthood, seemed to threaten the ruin of society; for the people, oppressed by all three, were the victims of their mutual rivalry. It is necessary to bear in mind the distracted and profligate condition of feudal Europe, before entering on a consideration of the plans of reformation which Hildebrand proposed. Whatever opinion may now be formed of his principles, they have this strong claim to our respect, that he lived their champion and died their victim. It is particularly necessary to remember, that Hildebrand found the church crushed beneath the yoke of the German aristocracy, and that in consequence the

prelates were rarely superior to the ignorant and barbarous nobles on whom they depended: abbots and bishops fought for precedency within the walls of the churches; and, even in the presence of the emperor, public worship was interrupted by battles between the armed retainers of rival prelates.* The character of Gregory VII. belongs to his age, and must be estimated by its relation to the circumstances of the period: he was the energetic representative of the opinion, that the world required some intellectual counterpoise to the brute force of feudalism; and, thus viewed, we think that the following character of Gregory VII. is barely just to his eminent qualifications.

"This celebrated pontiff has been described on one side as an eminent saint, and on the other as a species of moral monster, opposed to all improvement. There is no doubt that a pope, possessing anything like his influence, who would propose, and strive to enforce, the same measures in the nineteenth century that Gregory did in the eleventh, might be justly stigmatised as one of the worst of despots, but for his claim to rank among the most pre-eminent of blockheads; but, if we judge Hildebrand by the standard of his own age, we shall see that every one of his measures counter-

* See Bowden's Life of Gregory VII., a work of great learning and research, but still more honourably distinguished by a spirit of fairness and candour too rarely found in works that touch on subjects of religious controversy.

acted some evil principle, and helped to work out some antagonizing element of civilization.

"Gregory VII. was not less of a reformer than Luther; and, were we at liberty to digress, it would be easy to show many striking points of similarity between the characters of these great men. It is true, that Gregory attempted to work out his reformation by despotic means, but there were no others at his disposal: he was in the ecclesiastical world what Charlemagne, Peter the Great, and Napoleon have been in the political; so eager to accomplish a great and good end, that he trampled on every intervening obstacle, even when the impediment was an innocent or even useful institution. He wished to reform the church, and by means of the church to reform civil society—to introduce more morality, justice, and order into both: he possessed all the firmness resulting from a consciousness of rectitude, for, banished and dying, he never for a moment despaired of his cause, or doubted its sanctity." *

Hildebrand's election was to some extent informal: the young emperor had plausible grounds for refusing his approbation; in fact, the new pope invited Henry to do so. He wrote to the imperial court, praying that his election might not be ratified; for that, if he remained pope, he was resolved that the crimes for which the young emperor had been already cited by his predecessor

* Taylor's Natural History of Society, ii. 218.

should not escape with impunity. The emperor replied by a formal recognition of the pontiff, accompanied by a submissive letter, acknowledging the errors of the former part of his reign, which he attributed to evil counsellors. Gregory commenced his administration with a vigour which showed conscious strength, and which embodied the principle attributed to him by a modern dramatist:

> Look to the see of Rome! but look ye well
> That giant power be emblem'd by a giant,
> Not by a yeanling lamb. *

He sent a legate into Spain to investigate the ecclesiastical abuses of that kingdom, and to claim for the apostolic see supremacy over the countries recently recovered from the Moors, under the pretence that Spain, before the Saracenic invasion, was part of the patrimony of St. Peter. He claimed and received homage as a temporal prince from the Norman chiefs in the south of Italy; and he threatened the kings of France with excommunication for having encouraged the sale of benefices. But his great object was to secure the liberation of the church in Germany from its feudal thraldom, and bring it completely under subjection to the papacy: he sent legates to the emperor, soliciting permission to hold a council for the reformation of abuses; but the German prelates, warned by the

* Horne's Gregory VII.

example of what had taken place when Leo held a council in France, persuaded the emperor to evade the request. It was, indeed, sufficiently notorious that the sale of benefices in Germany formed a regular source of income to the nobility, and that there was not a single prelate beyond the Alps whose title could bear the scrutiny of a rigid examination.

Gregory in the mean time assembled a council of the Italian bishops: he laid before them an eloquent statement of the disorders of the church, and obtained from them a sanction of his two great projects of reform. "It was enacted, that any ecclesiastic who should hereafter receive investiture from the hands of a layman should be excommunicated; and that all married priests should either dismiss their wives, or be deposed." The question of investiture being once raised, could only be decided by force; each party could allege such plausible reasons for the views they took of the subject, that it could not be easily settled by argument. On the one hand, the pope contended that the administration of spiritual affairs, and the cure of souls, required to be set free from the influence of cupidity and worldly motive; he justly declared it necessary to the purity of a Christian church, that priests should be appointed for the benefit of the congregations, and that the bishops should be selected for their qualifications to govern the church. He appealed to the notorious scandals that had arisen

from the abuse of aristocratic patronage, which had virtually rendered promotion in the church the reward of subserviency, venality, and even atrocious crime, instead of the prize for piety and virtue. On the other hand, the emperor contended that the bishops, from the extent of their domains, the greatness of their political influence, and the rank which they held in the councils of the state, were to be regarded not as spiritual functionaries, but as temporal princes, and, as such, more properly regulated by their relations to the hierarchy of the state, than to that of the church. Most of the German bishops adopted the emperor's views; for they were well aware that their spiritual qualifications for the office which they held would not bear a moment's examination. In fact, Hildebrand fairly mooted a question, which has never yet been completely decided; namely, when a church has been brought into connection with a state, is it possible for that church to keep its patronage completely under the control of the clerical body, or must it admit the state to a participation? In the present instance, imperial feudalism had usurped "the lion's share," and the church required the energy of another lion to get back any portion of what had been thus wrested from it.

Gregory did not long hesitate in determining on the course to be adopted: he fulminated a bull of excommunication against the emperor's principal ministers, and summoned Henry himself to appear

before the papal tribunal, and answer to the charge of having simoniacally disposed of benefices and investitures. Henry derided the summons, dismissed the legates with contumely, and adopted the unprecedented course of assembling a council at Worms to depose the pope. In Rome itself a strong party had been formed against Gregory, whose energetic measures of reform had given great alarm to the ambitious and profligate nobility of that city: it is not certain whether the malcontents had entered into any negotiation with the imperial court, but they were well aware that their own feudal supremacy could not be maintained if that of the emperor were overthrown. Cincius, the son of the prefect of Rome, had long been recognized as the head of this party; he had for many years been the avowed enemy of Hildebrand, and had exerted all his influence to exclude him from the papacy: an opportunity of triumph seemed now offered to him; he resolved to seize the pope and deliver him up as a prisoner to the emperor. The mode in which he proceeded to execute his design was as wicked as the plot itself. On the solemn festival of Christmas, while Gregory was celebrating mass before the altar, an armed band rushed into the church, dispersed the congregation with brutal violence, wounded the pope himself in the forehead, tore off his pontifical robes, and threw him into prison. Intelligence of this outrage spread abroad: the citizens flew to arms, and were joined by many

retainers of the conspirators themselves. Cincius was alarmed by the threats of the armed and infuriate populace; he threw himself at the pope's feet, humbly supplicated pardon, and, having thrown open the gates of the prison, fled precipitately from Rome. Gregory, though wounded and bleeding, returned to the church, where he finished the service with as much firmness as if he had never been interrupted: he then returned to his palace, meditating plans of vengeance on the emperor, whom he more than suspected of having instigated this outrage.

The council of Worms deposed Gregory by a unanimous vote, and the bishops of Lombardy swore on the Gospels that they would never recognize him as pope. A monk of Padua had the boldness to undertake the charge of announcing this sentence to the pope in the midst of a synod of the Italian bishops assembled in the church of the Lateran. Such an insult fired all the spectators: the audacious monk would have been torn to pieces on the spot, had not Gregory taken him under his protection, and exhorted the assembled prelates to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." On the very next morning the enraged pontiff fulminated a bull of excommunication against the emperor, declaring him unworthy to reign, and absolving all his subjects from their allegiance. Never did the thunders of the Vatican produce so immediate or decisive an effect: the bishops of Lombardy, indeed,

remained faithful to the emperor, and hurled back Gregory's excommunication upon himself; but the German prelates deserted Henry in a body, the princes and nobles followed their example, and even his favourite attendants abandoned the palace. A camp was formed beyond the Rhine by the German supporters of the pope, who declared that they would proceed to elect a new emperor unless the reigning monarch obtained absolution; and the claims of candidates for the throne were as freely discussed as if a vacancy had already occurred.

Henry IV. was astounded at this unexpected result of his temerity: he made some faint efforts to revive the drooping spirits of his partisans; but, finding that the disaffection was making a most rapid progress, he declared to his subjects that he was willing to be reconciled to the pope, and that he would go in person to Italy for the purpose of obtaining absolution. When he had passed the Alps, the prelates and nobles of Lombardy crowded round him, and begged of him not to submit himself to his haughty enemy, pledging themselves to support him with their lives and fortunes. Henry was too frightened to adopt their bold counsel: he continued his journey, leaving his Italian partisans full of indignation at his cowardice.

On receiving intelligence that Henry had crossed the Alps, Gregory had removed to Canosa, as he was not yet certain of the emperor's intentions. Canosa was a strong fortress belonging to the

countess Matilda, whose attachment to the pope was so devoted, that, but for the great disparity of their ages, it might have been attributed to a warmer passion than fanaticism. Through her Henry tried to deprecate the wrath of the pontiff, who long appeared to be inexorable: at length Gregory consented to be appeased on condition of the delinquent performing public penance. During three of the coldest days of the month of January, 1077, the emperor of the West stood with naked head and feet before the gates of Canosa, waiting until the pontiff would deign to admit him to his presence. On the fourth day Gregory granted an audience to the penitent, but the emperor had to purchase absolution by still further humiliations: he was forced to submit himself to the judgment of the pope; to promise that he would retain, or resign, his throne according to the papal sentence; and that, if he should be declared guilty, he would offer no impediment to the election of a new emperor.

Great was the indignation of the Lombard princes and prelates when they heard of the disgraceful proceedings at Canosa; they declared Henry unworthy to reign, and made some preparations for raising his son Conrad to the empire: it would have been a singular destiny for the emperor to be deposed by his German subjects for resisting the pope, and by the Italians for submitting to him. In less than a fortnight, however, Henry

had become ashamed of his submission to Gregory: he was further enraged by discovering that the pontiff had induced the countess Matilda to bequeath her dominions to the church, as he was himself her next heir; and, instigated equally by shame and rage, he once more set Gregory at defiance. This was the signal for the malcontents in Germany to drop the mask of moderation: a diet was held in Forcheim, at the instigation of the archbishop of Mayence, over which the papal legates presided; sentence of deposition was pronounced against Henry, and Rodolph duke of Suabia was proclaimed emperor.

This hasty proceeding did not meet the approbation of Gregory: Henry was as powerful in Italy as he was weak in Germany; he had a large army at his disposal, and he was sure of warm support from the chiefs of Lombardy. Under these circumstances the pope resolved to temporize: he declared that he would recognize the claims of the competitor who would exhibit the most devotion to the holy see; and he thus induced the rival emperors to bid for his favour, while he kept their ambassadors ignorant of his final determination by protracted negotiations. But, though thus engaged in a dangerous struggle with the emperor of Germany, Gregory did not scruple to provoke most of the other monarchs of Europe: the king of France, and the Norman conqueror of England, were threatened with eccle-

siastical vengeance; the Byzantine emperor, and the king of Poland, were absolutely excommunicated; the king of Denmark was informed, that his dominions formed part of the patrimony of St. Peter; and it was announced, that it was better for Spain to remain in the hands of the Moors, than to be conquered by Christians who refused obedience to the church.

Henry and Rodolph continued to press the pope for a final decision on the affairs of the empire: a slight success obtained by the latter induced Gregory to lay aside his usual caution; he repeated his excommunication of Henry, and sent Rodolph a crown of gold, accompanying it with a prediction that he would triumph in the contest. This prophecy was not fulfilled. Henry, instead of being daunted, resolved to show himself worthy of empire: he answered the bull of excommunication by summoning a council at Brixen, in which Gregory was deposed, and his most bitter enemy, the archbishop of Ravenna, elevated to the papacy by the name of Clement III. Soon after, he encountered his rival on the banks of the Elster, where Rodolph fell by the hands of Godfrey of Bouillon, who was subsequently the great hero of the first crusade. Superstition added to the effect of this victory; it was studiously spread abroad that Rodolph had received his first wound in the right hand, which he had lifted up when swearing allegiance to Henry. Having restored tranquillity to

Germany, the emperor advanced into Italy with a powerful army, accompanied by his own pope, whose mildness of disposition won over those who were weary of the austere and inflexible character of Gregory. It was impossible for Gregory to meet the imperial forces in the field; he applied in vain to various monarchs for assistance, and summoned to his aid Robert Guiscard, who was then pursuing his career of victory in Greece:* the countess Matilda, however, still adhered to his cause, sending a body of troops to harass the imperial forces as they advanced to besiege Rome. Gregory did not fail to employ all the weapons of his spiritual armoury,—prayers, processions, interdicts, and excommunications: the Romans, animated by his example, made a brilliant defence, but the city was at length taken by storm; the intrusive pope, Clement, was solemnly enthroned, and he, in return, solemnly crowned the emperor. But Gregory VII. was still unsubdued: from the castle of Crescentius, where he had found refuge, he hurled menace and defiance against his enemies; while his great ally, Robert Guiscard, who had returned from Greece, was leading his gallant Normans to repel the imperialists. Guiscard forced an entrance into Rome, gave up the city to be pillaged by his savage soldiery, and then carried Gregory in triumph to Salerno. Here fatigue and mortification soon brought the pontiff to the grave: with his latest

* See vol. i. p. 287.

breath he protested against the emperor and Clement, whom alone he excepted from the general absolution of those whom he had excommunicated during his pontificate. Defeat had not led him to doubt the rectitude of his conduct; and he quitted life with the memorable declaration, "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and therefore I die an exile."

The spirit of Gregory VII. animated his successors, Victor III. and Urban II. The latter not only maintained the war against Henry, but succeeded in instigating Conrad to rebel against his father; and held a council at Placentia, in the midst of the imperial partisans, where the excommunication of the emperor was solemnly repeated. Urban's wrath was next directed against the king of France: that monarch had repudiated his queen for the purpose of marrying his adulterous mistress, Bertrade, countess of Anjou. The great body of the French clergy protested against such scandalous immorality; the pope remonstrated in vain, and at length he summoned a council to meet in France, without even asking the king's permission. In November 1095 the celebrated council of Clermont assembled, where the resolution for attempting the recovery of Palestine from the Mohammedans was finally adopted. It was scarcely less remarkable for the sentence of excommunication being pronounced against the king of France by his own clergy, assembled in his own territories.

Pascal II. induced Henry, the emperor's second son, to imitate the example of his brother Conrad, whose death opened a way for his ambition and revolt against his father. Henry IV. made a gallant but a fruitless resistance: dethroned by his unnatural son, deprived of the common necessaries of life, this enlightened monarch sank under accumulated wrongs; and his body, prohibited from burial for five years, remained during that space of time a monument of the endurance of papal vengeance, and of the inhumanity of his rebellious son. But the parricide soon began to feel the consequences of his guilt: Henry V. found the demands of the pope intolerable; a new series of wars commenced, and, after many alternations of victory and defeat, the emperor was so reduced that he consented to have the matters in dispute referred to the consideration of the diet of Worms. All parties were resolved on peace, but the papal legates were permitted to dictate the conditions. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the superiority of the holy see should be distinctly recognized; that bishops and abbots, but only as a matter of special favour, should be elected in presence of the emperor; that investiture of the temporal fiefs held by prelates should be given by the sceptre; but that the cross and ring, the sacred symbols of spiritual power, should not be profaned by the touch of princes.

These terms, subsequently sanctioned by the

council of Lateran, put an end to the war of investitures; the longest, the most scandalous, and the most sanguinary that had yet originated from the rival claims of spiritual and temporal power. Rome triumphed; and it cannot be denied that the victory was, upon the whole, a gain to civilization: had feudalism prevailed, it is doubtful, humanly speaking, whether Christianity itself might not have sunk into oblivion amid ignorance and barbarity. Henry V. very reluctantly resigned the portion of spiritual jurisdiction, which, though originally a usurpation, had been long held by his ancestors, and which he had sworn to preserve, along with the other rights of the empire, when he ascended the throne. Absolved from ecclesiastical censures, but not from guilt, the unfortunate prince could not hush the voice of conscience, or hide from himself the disgrace of being forced personally to undergo that humiliation, the courageous refusal of which he had punished by parricide.

Whilst feudalism was losing its ascendancy over the church, it was acquiring a strong hold over public opinion in another direction by the institution of chivalry; which, in its origin, was but a softening down of that spirit of adventure which the barbarous robbers and pirates had brought with them from Northern Europe. It was also a reaction against the daring deeds of oppression and violence perpetrated by the lords of castles. In the disorganized state of society which followed

the usurpation of the Capets, the feebleness of sex and age was left without defence: the laws slumbered because there was no one to enforce their provisions; and no protection could be expected from monarchs as timid as women, and, like them, secluded in the chambers of a palace. To supply the protection to the weak which the state was unable to afford, appears to have been the primary idea of chivalry. At a period in which religious zeal began to revive, and when valour seemed to be the most meritorious offering that could be made to the Divinity, it is not surprising that a form of military ordination should be devised,—that chivalry should be instituted as a kind of second priesthood, designed for those who were to be actively engaged in Divine service. It is probable also that the worship of the Virgin Mary, which, in the ninth and tenth centuries, had nearly displaced that of God himself, and which had taught the young and ardent to feel the most profound reverence for female purity and loveliness, contributed to give to the defence of the weaker sex, and to the passion of love, that religious character which distinguishes the gallantry of the middle ages from that pourtrayed by the poets in the heroic times of Greece.

The order of chivalry conferred on warriors was, in fact, much more of a religious than of a military obligation; by its mystic ceremonies the knight

devoted himself to the service of God and the ladies: it was, therefore, held that the order of knighthood could not be conferred on infidels.* The candidate for chivalry commenced by taking a bath, as a symbol that he presented himself for admission into the order free from every stain of moral impurity; he then clothed himself in a tunic of white linen, over which was thrown a crimson robe and a scarf of black silk: it was explained to him that these colours were significant of the purity of his life, the blood that he was to shed in defence of God's church, and the death which he was ever to keep present in his mind. A girdle, emblematic of chastity, was fastened round his loins; gilded spurs were fastened on his feet, intimating the speed with which he would hasten wherever duty called him; and he who armed the young knight with his sword, recommended to him rectitude, loyalty, the defence of the poor from the oppression of the rich, and the protection of

* Sismondi regards "L'Ordene de Chevalerie par Hue de Tabarie," a French romantic poem of the thirteenth century, as the most authentic record of chivalry and its obligations. In this poem Hue de Tabarie, having been taken prisoner by Saladin, is asked to confer the honour of knighthood on the sultan. His reply is to the following effect:

> To knighthood and its holy name,
> Sir sultan, you can have no claim:
> By you a wicked law is priz'd;
> You disbelieve, you 're unbaptiz'd.
>
> Contes et Fabliaux, vol. ii.

the weak from the tyranny of the strong.* In order that the young aspirant should remember the promises which he had made, the person by whom he was admitted into the order gave him a slight blow on the back of his neck. This was the form of taking persons to witness in any important transaction; and, when a lord granted a charter, he struck each of the witnesses pretty smartly, no matter what might be their rank, in order that they should not forget the transaction.† He who armed the young knight further exhorted him on four points, which were to be understood as included in his vow of chivalry: he was to remove from every place where treacherous and false

* These obligations are quaintly stated in L'Ordene de Chevalerie:

Knights must be loyal, just, and true,
And still the paths of right pursue;
The poor and needy they must guard
From tyrant rich, who press them hard;
And they should watch the great and strong,
Lest to the feeble they do wrong.

Contes et Fabliaux, vol. ii.

† In a charter granted to the convent of Pradelles, in Normandy, there is a very curious record of this characteristic memoria technica. Humphrey, the donor, gave smart blows to his sons, but struck more heavily Richard de Lillebonne. The young knight angrily asked why he had been hit harder than the rest. "Because you are the youngest," said Humphrey, "and likely to live the longest; it is, therefore, desirable to imprint the transaction on your memory, that you should bear witness of it whenever occasion may arise."—Sismondi, Hist. des Franc. iv. 203.

judgment prevailed, unless he had sufficient strength to redress the wrong; he was to aid with all his power, and duly reverence, dames and damsels; to fast strictly every Friday; to attend mass every day, and not to neglect making offerings at the altar.*—It appears that the clergy did not forget their own interests when they were associating their own constitutions with the orders of chivalry.

The honour of knighthood was granted only to

* These duties are thus stated in L'Ordene de Chevalerie:

Where fraud prevails and wile bears sway,
Where judges follow falsehood's way,
A knight must not remain, unless
He can the injured cause redress.

* * * * *
In him must dame and damsel find
Faithful advice and counsel kind;
If haply they should want such aid,
His succour must not be delay'd;
Since the true knight's best glory lies
In grateful glance from ladies' eyes:
To them are love and reverence due—
He 's bound to prove their servant true,
And ever make it his best care
To guard the honour of the fair.

* * * * *
On every Friday in the year
To break his fast a knight should fear.

* * * * *
Daily at mass the knight must bow,
There to renew his holy vow;
His offerings must be duly made,
And on God's holy altar laid.

Contes et Fabliaux, vol. ii.

persons of noble blood; that is to say, only to the descendants of the last horde of barbarian conquerors that had established their ascendancy by the sword. No one in those ages supposed for a moment that there was even a possibility of crossing the barrier which separated the condition of the serf from that of the gentleman: courage and virtue were deemed to be as much the prerogatives of exalted rank, as political power or the enjoyment of freedom. This exclusion was so universally established by every existing usage of society, that it was deemed unnecessary to sanction it by any positive law; for, in fact, the masses of mankind were deemed to be outside the pale of humanity. Even amongst the nobility, admission into the order of chivalry could not be obtained until after a certain period of probation or apprenticeship; it was necessary that the candidate for knighthood should "win the spurs." It is singular that those very persons who regarded servitude as an indelible stain, should nevertheless have rendered a species of domestic service the preparatory course for admission to knightly honour. The candidates were generally expected to serve some knight as his esquire, or, in the language of the day, his "varlet," until an opportunity should be afforded of performing some exploit worthy of being rewarded by the honours of chivalry. This system of apprenticeship became universal in almost every class of society; the priest had his deacon, the knight his varlet, the merchant or artizan his

apprentice, and in all these classes the young men were expected to perform all the menial offices of personal service, without evincing any repugnance to the task. In fact, such services were regarded by the young varlets or esquires as an honour rather than a degradation.

In consequence of this institution, all the castles of the nobility became to a great extent schools of chivalry. The same young men who performed nearly all the domestic offices of the mansion, and were bound to serve as private soldiers in defence of its walls, were the companions of the castellan in the chase, and in the martial exercises of the tilt-yard; the associates of his children in their studies or their sports; and they were received as equals by the ladies of the castle, even when they waited on them at table. Music and poetry soon became the favourite recreation of these chivalrous societies of masters and servants, in which familiarity was kept in restraint by a sense of subordination, and the pride of command was tempered by consciousness of equality. This was probably the most efficient cause of the refinement of manners which began to ameliorate the grossness of feudalism, and the source of the rapid progress which society, at least in the upper ranks, began to make towards courtesy and politeness. Young ladies were similarly sent as attendants on noble dames, generally of a rank higher than themselves: even princes and princesses were not exempt from this

servitude; we find daughters of the king of France forming part of the household of the earl of Flanders. It would be unreasonable to suppose that these associations did not sometimes lead to great abuses: tales of scandal were, in fact, circulated respecting every castle; and these licentious anecdotes formed an inexhaustible theme for the writers of lays and romances, the fashionable literature of the period. The disgusting grossness of the romances of chivalry may, indeed, be received as a proof that purity of morals formed but a small part of knightly refinement.

Jousts, tournaments, and passages of arms were extensions of the exercises in the tilt-yard: they were sometimes connected with the "wager of battle," or appeal to the judgment of God, by which persons accused of any great crime were permitted to prove their innocence in the lists. But, even when there was no question of guilt or innocence in issue, knights not unfrequently engaged in mortal combat for mere amusement: they were permitted by mutual consent to lay aside the blunt weapons of courtesy, and employ the sharp instruments of war. While, on the one hand, this savage custom sharpened the desire for military adventure, which was the curse of the age, it tended, on the other, to introduce a tenderness and courtesy into actual war; so that, if the festal lists were frequently stained by the slaughter of the battle-field, the latter sometimes exhibited an interchange of mu-

tual compliments between those engaged in open war, which formed a pleasing contrast to the ruthless barbarity displayed in the earlier engagements. Chivalry did not prevent many nobles and knights from pursuing the profession of kidnappers and robbers; but religion interfered to give these outrages a new direction: it was declared that such atrocities were criminal towards Christians, but that they might lawfully be indulged against infidels and hereties. It is therefore not wonderful that the proposal of a war which promised a full indulgence of fanaticism, a bright prospect of military glory, and no unreasonable chances of plunder, was received with the warmest enthusiasm.

It has been usual to represent the crusades as a sudden outburst of fanaticism, and consequently as an episode in the history of Europe; but, in truth, they were the result of the various causes which we have described as working a change in European society. The thirst for war, the spirit of adventurous enterprize, pervaded every rank, from the highest to the lowest, both in France and Germany, which had not ceased to be the theatre of sanguinary wars and religious feuds since the death of Charlemagne. It was still fresh in the memory of needy knights, and the leaders of the bands of military adventurers who roamed over Europe in search of some employment, that the Normans had conquered the kingdoms of England and of Sicily, and had carved out rich estates with their

swords. "The truce of God," imperfectly as it was observed, imposed some restraint on the robberies and private wars of the feudal barons, whilst the institutions of chivalry sharpened their passions for military enterprize and military glory; they were impatient of inactivity, and in many instances they found it very difficult to find either occupation or support for their armed retainers. Under such circumstances, the proposal of a Holy War was an unexpected gratification of their dearest wishes. It had everything which could recommend it to the prevailing opinions of the day: there was a promise of absolution for all past crimes to men whose lives were spent in deeds of violence; there was glory offered to those whose passion for fame had been nurtured with the most sedulous care from their infancy; and there was a prospect of riches to a race distinguished at once for the most unscrupulous cupidity, and the most profligate extravagance.

A crusade had, in fact, been planned by Gregory VII.; that pontiff would probably have led an army into Palestine, had he not been so deeply involved in the war of investitures. The hope of re-uniting the schismatical Greeks to the Latin church led Urban II. to listen eagerly to the requests which the emperor of Constantinople made for assistance against the Turks. From the time that these barbarians had embraced Mohammedanism, they manifested a spirit of ferocious fanaticism far surpassing that which had been dis-

played by the original Saracens; their progress to conquest was steady, and their own divisions alone saved the Byzantine empire from ruin. The difficulty of communication with the powers of Europe, aggravated by the necessity of securing the assent, not only of monarchs, but of their principal vassals, presented an insuperable obstacle to what Gregory appears to have contemplated,—a general league of the Christian princes against the Mohammedans. Urban found it still more difficult to organize such a confederacy; he knew that Europe was ready for the movement, but he also saw that it was too disorganized to be acted upon simultaneously. Accident supplied him with an assistant who was able to make fanaticism perform the functions of diplomacy; and Christendom was roused to combined action by a personage apparently vile and despicable, but in the highest degree fiery and energetic. A poor hermit, named Peter, a native of Picardy, low in stature and mean in aspect, undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, and, after enduring countless dangers and difficulties, reached Jerusalem.

Few cities in the world have been the theatre of so many calamities as "the daughter of Zion." Seventeen times it has been taken, pillaged, and all but levelled to the ground. Miriads have been slaughtered in attack, or defence, around its walls; the very soil on which it stands may be regarded as one vast charnel-house. Yet, in the midst of

its successive desolations, the Jew, the Christian, and the Mussulman have continued to regard the ground as holy, and have eagerly sought to worship in a place, which each, for a different reason, believed to be more peculiarly "the habitation of God's house, and the place where his honour was dwelling." While the Saracenic empire was flourishing under the gentle sway of the Abasside khaliphs, the Christians of Palestine enjoyed toleration on the payment of a moderate tribute, and the visits of the Latin pilgrims were not only permitted, but encouraged, for the sake of the taxes they paid and the commerce they promoted; but the Seljukian Turks, with the fanaticism of new converts and the ignorance of barbarians, cruelly maltreated the Christians and Jews of Palestine, plundered the pilgrims, and often murdered them in mere wantonness.

The division of the Seljukian monarchy aggravated these calamities: the safe-conduct purchased from one horde of barbarians was disregarded by another; and the pilgrim, after having sacrificed all his wealth to purchase a passport, found frequently that it afforded him no protection from murder or the horrors of slavery.

When Peter reached the Holy City, he felt greatly mortified at being obliged to pay a piece of gold for permission to enter: every step increased his indignation as he witnessed the wantonness of Turkish tyranny, the profanation of the

holy places, and the shocking insults heaped on the patriarch and the clergy. It is probable, that before he commenced his pilgrimage he had frequently heard plans for the liberation of Palestine discussed, for every pilgrim who returned to Europe brought home stories well calculated to raise the indignation of Christendom. Peter with great prudence began diligently to investigate the political condition of the Seljukian Turks, and he came to the conclusion that the division of their monarchy into four sultanies would greatly facilitate the success of an invasion. The meditations of the day haunted his slumbers; he had a dream which he regarded as a divine revelation, summoning him to devote his energies to deliver Palestine, with full assurance of success: inspired by the vision, he returned to Europe, to spread the enthusiasm which had taken possession of his own soul.

When Urban first proposed a crusade at the council of Placentia, the project was received very coolly by the Italians; but, in the brief interval between that and the council of Clermont, the preaching of Peter, and of the various monks who followed in his course, had prepared multitudes to respond to the pope's appeal. When Urban had eloquently pourtrayed to the French prelates and nobles the wretched state of Palestine, he promised the protection of the church to the families and properties of those who engaged in its redemp-

tion; he described the vast riches of Asia, which he declared were reserved to reward the faithful; and urged his hearers, as they valued the blessings derived from their Saviour, to redeem his holy heritage from the pollution of infidels. From the assembled multitude there burst forth one unanimous cry of "God wills it! God wills it!" In the enthusiasm of the moment so many offered to take the cross, which was worn as a badge of enlistment on the right shoulder, that the supply of materials was exhausted, and many tore up their garments to furnish crosses. This symbol, from which these wars derive their name of Croissade, or Crusade, was usually worn on the right shoulder; but many placed it on their back in consequence of a perverted application of the text, "He who taketh not up his cross and followeth not me, is not worthy of me."

The council of Clermont had fixed the feast of the Assumption—that is, August 15th, 1096,—for the departure of the crusaders; but, before the stated day arrived, the preaching of the fanatical monks and friars had generated such an extensive enthusiasm, or rather epidemic madness, that all Christendom seemed to be on the march to Asia. This religious frenzy had seized on all classes,—serfs and freemen, women and children, the feeble, the sickly, and the aged, not less than those who possessed youth and courage. Many, perhaps most, looked forward merely to death in the Holy Land;

feeling assured that their arrival on its sacred soil would obtain for them, not merely remission for their sins, but all the glories of Paradise. Tumultuous bands of the ignorant, the profligate, and the outlawed formed themselves in various provinces; they abandoned their ordinary occupations, and set forward on their wild expedition, without having any notion of the distance which separated them from Asia, or the dangers that were to be encountered on the road. The kings and nobles, the pope and prelates, were alarmed at the spontaneous migrations of these tumultuous hordes; they applied to them very appropriately the Scriptural description, "The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands."*

Peter had been a soldier before he became a monk; he was therefore easily persuaded to head one horde of these barbarous volunteers. A second division was headed by a brave Norman gentleman, who took the title of Walter the Pennyless; but did not, like Le Poer, or Le Pauvre, in Britain, make the epithet of his poverty the hereditary name of titled and wealthy families. A third division was formed of Germans under the command of a priest named Godescale; but this ignorant bigot was unable to guide the disorderly rabble which had collected round him, and the host marched forward without any determined leader. Whole families joined in this adventure: the farmer was

* Proverbs, xxx. 27.

to be seen driving his waggon containing his wife and children; the serf walked along with his partner, rejoicing that they were both emancipated from feudal slavery; while around the lines were boys bearing mimic implements of war, mistaking every stranger for a Turk, and every new town for Jerusalem. The ignorance of these fanatic hordes was lamentable: one division, as has been mentioned, had no fixed commander; but the credulous creatures reposed trust in a goat and a goose, which they believed to be sent from heaven as their guides. Unregulated bigotry soon led to the most violent excesses; the Jews along the Rhine were the first victims of the crusading host, for the fanatics were persuaded that the sacrifice of this unfortunate race would be the best propitiation that could be offered for their future success. Myriads of the hapless Jews were ruthlessly put to death with bitter tortures and indignities; whole families committed suicide by mutual agreement; a very few submitted to be baptized, hoping to purchase safety by apostacy.* The

* This persecution is very pathetically described in the Chronicles of Rabbi Joseph; from which as the work is very rare, we shall make one or two extracts.

"That year (A.D. 1096) was a year of sorrow for Jacob; and they were given over to plunder in the countries of the uncircumcised, and in all the places where they were scattered. And upon them fell many sorrows and devastations, which are written in the law of Moses, and which cannot be told in a book; for the abominable Germans and French rose up against them—

archbishop of Mayence made every exertion in his power to save these wretched victims; but had the mortification, in spite of his efforts, to witness their murder when they sought refuge in his own palace. The persecution of the Jews was not end-

people of a fierce countenance that have no respect to the persons of the old, neither have they mercy upon the young. And they said, 'Let us be revenged for our Messiah upon the Jews which are amongst us. And let us destroy them from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be had no more in remembrance; so shall they change their glory, and they shall be like unto us: then we will go to the East.' .... And they entered, and slew them which were found there with the edge of the sword; they had no compassion upon man or woman. And they pulled down houses and cast down the strong places, and they put forth their hand to the spoil, and there was none to deliver out of their hand in the day of the Lord's vengeance. And the books of the Law they cast to the ground, and trod them under their feet; and they uttered their voice in the house of the Lord, as in a day of a solemn feast. And they said 'Aha! this is the day for which we have longed!' and they devoured Israel in every corner. O Lord, behold and see! They left none alive, save the children and sucklings which were defiled with the proud water (that is, were baptized) by force. But it came to pass afterwards, that they esteemed their fear as vanity, and their persons as the mire of the streets; and they said, 'Let us return to the Lord our God,' because fury was over them, and the slain did sanctify the Holy One of Israel in the eyes of the sun, and they chose death rather than life, for they refused to be defiled. Many did slay themselves; every one, his brother, and his neighbour, his sons and his daughters, the bridegroom and the bride, the wife of his bosom. And, from compassion, the women slew their children with all their heart and with all their soul; and they said, 'Hear, O Israel!' (the first words of the Jewish confession of faith,) when their souls were poured out into their mothers' bosoms."

ed by the departure of this fanatic populace; all the companies of crusaders looked upon themselves as equally bound to shed the blood of the people that had crucified the Saviour, and to share their spoils. To the very end of the crusades, the hatred against this unfortunate people became yearly more venomed and inveterate.

It is not necessary for us to dwell at any length on the misfortunes of these fanatical hordes: want forced them to pillage, and their outrages soon provoked the resentment of the Hungarians, the Bulgarians, and the Greeks, through whose territories they passed. They had to fight their way to the walls of Constantinople, where the emperor Alexius, who had long since repented of his eager supplications for assistance from the West, was only anxious to get rid of his dangerous auxiliaries as soon as possible. He hastily provided a fleet to transport them over the Bosphorus, assigning them quarters in Cibotus, a town which he had begun to build for the English and other refugees, who sought shelter from Norman and feudal tyranny in the Eastern empire. Two months of ease at Cibotus restored the crusaders to their former vigour, but at the same time greatly increased their spirit of insubordination. They had been advised to wait patiently for the arrival of the regular crusading army, which was fast approaching; but, impatient of control, they made incursions into the territories of the sultan of

Nice, and, not content with sweeping the flocks and herds, they inflicted the most horrible tortures on the inhabitants. Killij Arslan,* sultan of Nice, who had levied an immense army on the first intelligence of the vast preparations made in Europe, attacked the marauders, and routed them with great slaughter. The Franks in Cibotus tumultuously demanded to be led forth to the field for the purpose of revenging the death of their brethren. Walter, who possessed some share of military talent, strenuously dissuaded them from prematurely hazarding a battle with the Turkish forces; but, finding himself unable to restrain the ardour of fanaticism and ignorance, he consented to lead them to the field. Killij Arslan had his spies in the Christian camp: he received early intelligence of their proceedings, and was prepared for the attack. The crusaders rushed boldly to the combat; but they were outnumbered by the Turks, entangled in difficult and unknown ground, thrown into confusion by their own want of discipline, and finally surrounded. It was a slaughter rather than a fight: Walter and his bravest soldiers fell; a few cut their way to the camp, but they were

* Most of the Western historians have fallen into the mistake, of very ancient origin, that Soliman was sultan of Nice at the time of the first crusade. But Soliman had been slain A. D. 1085, in a battle with Tutush, the brother of Melek Shah, between Aleppo and Antioch; and had been succeeded by his son David, who took the surname of Killij Arslan, that is, "the sword of the Lion."

closely pursued, their entrenchments stormed, and their wives and children placed at the mercy of the conquerors. Alexius sent his navy to bring off the miserable remnant of these adventurers, first depriving them of their arms to prevent a renewal of their former outrages. Such was the fate of the tumultuous vanguard of the crusaders, whose conduct justly prejudiced the Greeks against the cause, and whose overthrow enabled the Turks to boast that the Christians who had come to insult Asia were a herd of wretched poltroons wholly destitute of military experience.

We have described the crusade of ignorant fanaticism, which must not be confounded with that of disciplined feudalism. In fact, the nobles and knights of France and Germany were more terrified than pleased by the independent movements of their vassals; which they regarded, and not without reason, as an insurrection of the peasantry. The destruction of such perilous enthusiasts seemed to be, and probably was, the means of saving their estates; for fanaticism, when once kindled, becomes indiscriminate in its objects, even those who have fanned its flames are not always safe from the ensuing conflagration. There was little display of religious folly in the nobles and knights who combined to establish Christian feudalism in Palestine; they undertook the expedition from the same motives that brought the duke of Normandy into England, Strongbow into Ireland, and

the sons of Tancred into Southern Italy. Religion was pleaded as an excuse for these invasions, as well as for the crusades; and so far it may be said that civilization had made some progress, when the descendants of robbers and pirates found it necessary to disguise their old barbarous thirst for conquest and plunder by pretexts of sanctity and devotion.

The great difficulty for the nobles who engaged in this crusade was to obtain funds sufficient to defray the cost of so distant an expedition. Almost all of them were ready to sell their titles, their privileges, their lordships; but it was not an easy matter to find purchasers. The kings of France and England bought back some feudal *suzerainetés*, the possession of which tended to strengthen the power of the crown; but they had neither sufficient money nor wisdom to pursue this course of policy to such an extent as would have been desirable. The bishops, abbots, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries were much better customers; the wealth of the church was freely expended in enlarging its political powers. Several nobles of the second order, such as viscounts and barons, who remained at home, purchased emancipation from their immediate suzerains, or enlarged their fiefs by buying from their more adventurous neighbours. Finally, the communes and municipalities, which had been hitherto little better than armed associations against the public order, or rather the pub-

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lic disorder, of feudalism, acquired by liberal contributions a legal sanction, which their lords, pressed to provide for their immediate wants, and utterly reckless of the future, were not in a condition to refuse.

When money had been thus raised, regular armies began to be formed in the various provinces of France, Germany, and Italy. The cavalry consisted of nobles and knights, protected by cuirasses and coats of mail which were nearly impenetrable, wearing helmets on their heads, the visors of which, when let down, completely concealed the face of the warrior. Each noble and knight had levied in his lordship a number of men-at-arms and archers, selected from the bravest of his serfs and vassals. There was, besides, an inferior class of infantry, composed chiefly of the untrained peasants; they were armed merely with a sword and buckler, and they seemed to have been principally invited to a share in the expedition for the purpose of swelling the ranks of death. It is not easy to determine the amount of this army; but, when reviewed by Godfrey in the plains of Nice, it is said that more than half a million were found to be present. In this calculation, however, it is probable that the women, children, and followers of the camp are included.

Amidst such a crowd of individuals, previously unknown to each other, marching under different leaders, and held together by a very feeble bond

of union, confusion was almost inevitable. The methods which the crusaders devised for mutual recognition permanently imprinted themselves on modern civilization. Surnames, which had just come into use, became hereditary designations of families; and genealogies became an important study for heralds-at-arms, who expected to find an ally in those who claimed affinity or relationship with their lord. Armorial bearings were invented nearly at the same time, and they were used for the same purpose as our modern uniforms: the soldiers, in addition to the cross worn by all the crusaders, bore the cognizance of their respective chiefs on some conspicuous portion of their persons; and thus the heralds-at-arms were enabled to muster the men in their several divisions, and convey the orders of the chiefs to the battalions for which they were designed.

The success of the crusaders in establishing a feudal monarchy in Jerusalem was owing, not to their possessing greater zeal than the Mohammedans, but to the superiority of European arms and discipline. In almost every engagement, the light horses of the Turks, and their half-naked riders, armed only with bows and scimitars, were borne down by the weight of the European steeds, and the ponderous lances of the crusaders. After innumerable toils and sufferings, Jerusalem was conquered, and a Christian kingdom established in Palestine. This event was hailed with acclamations

of joy throughout Christendom, but it spread universal sorrow throughout the Mohammedan nations. We shall venture to translate a Mussulman elegy, composed on the occasion by Abivardi, a poet of Bagdad. It is not merely a curious specimen of the feelings and literature of the period, but it enables us to compare the motives of the Christian warriors with those which the poet believed most likely to influence their Mohammedan enemies.

In mingled streams together flow
The blood of life, the tears of woe:
Our strength is gone, our hopes are 'reft,
And nought but shame and sorrow left.

Sons of Islám, all tears are vain,
When beaming sabres light the plain;
'Tis yours the fatal fight to meet,
Where heads are rolling at the feet.

Can warriors sink in soft repose,
Can tranquil sleep their eyelids close,
While round them is a summons sped
That well might wake the mouldering dead?

Your Syrian brethren know not rest,
Their camels' backs are ceaseless pressed;
Changed only for the shákal's jaw,
Or for the vulture's ravenous maw.

They hear the Christian's cruel taunt,
The Grecian scorn, the Roman vaunt;
While you, to coming dangers blind,
The robes of peace around you bind.

What streams of blood have flowed in vain!
Helpless the Syrian dames remain,
With nothing but their hands to hide
From lawless eyes their beauty's pride.

The lances join with shivering crash,
With lightning gleam the sabres flash;
The war puts on an aspect dread,
That e'en might blanch an infant's head.

Such is this war, that those who yield
To coward fear, and quit the field,
Shall yet in madness and despair
Grind their set teeth, and tear their hair.

Mohammed quits his holy grave,
And calls to arms the good and brave:
Hark! heard ye not his piercing cries?
"Sons of Islám! awake! arise!

"Away be sloth and chilling fear;
Draw forth the sabre, grasp the spear:
Religion totters to its fall;—
Protect it—save it—one and all!"

The coward, who avoids the strife,
For worse than death preserves his life:
Disgrace—a wound that ne'er can close—
Shall press him with unnumbered woes.

Can Arab chiefs forget their fame,
And bear this bitter load of shame?
Can Persia's warriors, vile and base,
Their ancient glories thus deface?

Oh! if no more their bosoms feel
The ardour of religious zeal,
Still may they haste to save their wives,
Their parents, and their children's lives.

If Heaven's rewards, or honour's call,
Upon their ears unheeded fall,
Shall not the wealthy spoil invite
Our warriors once more to the fight?

The social strength of feudalism was never so fully tested as in the Christian kingdom of Pales-

tine, for there alone were its principles fairly carried out to their full extent. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the results were, continued distraction during the whole period of the state's existence, and irremediable ruin after a very brief duration. Fanaticism was consumed by the intensity of its own fires: the Christians soon learned to regard the Mohammedans as human beings, not as monsters that ought to be extirpated; commerce began to unite those whom religious bigotry had dissevered; and, even before the crusading madness was quite extinguished, the votaries of the crescent and the cross met as peaceful traders in the Levant. Ambition of military glory was far more influential than fanaticism with all the later crusaders, except, perhaps, St. Louis; and the spirit of feudal chivalry declined with no less rapidity than religious zeal. Vows to serve a campaign against the infidels in Palestine were made only to be broken, until at length the fate of the Holy Land was forgotten in the increasing complication of the politics of Europe.

CHAPTER III.

Insurrections of the Peasantry against Feudal Tyranny.

It is generally found, that, wherever an ascendancy is established, the great bulk of chroniclers and historians belong to the dominant party; while the oppressed have the tale of their wrongs, and of the wild justice of their revenge, preserved in rude ballads and popular songs. In England, the Saxons never submitted to the Norman yoke so abjectly and completely as the Gauls and Gallo-Romans to their Germanic conquerors: there was a rugged obstinacy in the Saxon character, a stern, dogged resolution, which never gave way, even when resistance was hopeless and escape impossible. Our old ballads amply prove that the bold outlaws, who threw off the thraldom of their lords, and lived in defiance of them on the game of the forests, were the favourite heroes of the English peasantry; the scorn, indeed, of the castle, but the admiration of the cottage. Adam Bell, William of Cloudesley, Robin Hood and his companions, were the theme of the rustic's eulogy: he triumphed in the arts by which they baffled the feudal magistracy, and

the courage with which they defied the feudal aristocracy; he even gave royalty the credit of participating in such feelings, and told apocryphal tales of kings having met with bold outlaws, whose skill in archery filled them with such admiration that the monarchs took them into their personal service, and thus delivered them from the cruel bondage of tyrant lords. England was at the time intersected by marshes, and in many places covered with woods, which afforded shelter to the discontented: in these fastnesses the spirit of Saxon stubbornness was fostered by the tales which were related of the oppressions practised in the open country. Even at this day a spirit of indomitable perseverance and unyielding firmness marks the character of the foresters of Rossendale and Pendle: they have successfully applied to manufactures the same energies which their ancestors devoted to maintaining a barbarous independence; and their success is infinitely more the result of steadiness and unbending resolution than of any extraordinary genius or superiority of talent.

The Anglo-Saxons had another advantage over the ordinary population of conquered countries; they were the best archers in the world. It is certain that lands, in which infantry very nearly approaches the value of cavalry, possessed, in the ancient systems of warfare, greater freedom and more equitable institutions than those where the knights alone were esteemed of value in the field.

The English peasants were not less indebted to the bow than the mountaineers of Switzerland were to the spear; both showed that infantry might be rendered superior to cavalry in combat, and that there were circumstances under which the half-naked peasant would be more than a match for the mail-clad knight. Such a lesson was useful to both: it lowered the overweening pride of the noble, and it raised the self-respect of the peasant.

Another circumstance which tended to render the condition of the tillers of the soil in England superior to that of the same class in France, was the greater power of the English monarchs over their vassals. All the chronicles testify that the worst oppressions which the Anglo-Saxons ever endured were practised in the reign of Stephen, when a disputed succession enabled the nobles to maintain for a period their barbarous and feudal independence. "In this king's time," says the Saxon Chronicle, "all was dissension and evil and rapine. Against him soon rose rich men. They had sworn oaths, but no truth maintained. They were all forsworn, and forgetful of their troth. They built castles, which they held out against him.* They cruelly oppressed the wretched men of the

* Castles, except for the protection of the border, were discouraged by most of the English monarchs: they were detested by the peasantry, because dungeons and torture-chambers formed an essential part of their architecture. Several of the bishops erected castles in the reign of Stephen, and converted them to the same infamous purposes as the temporal barons.

land with castle-work. They filled the castles with devils and evil men. They seized those who appeared to have any goods, both men and women, and kept them in prison for the sake of their gold and silver. They tortured them with the most excruciating tortures, so that never did martyrs suffer more than these poor people.* Some were suspended by the feet, and smoked with full (foul) smoke.† Others were suspended by the thumbs, and others by the head, while burning brands were applied to their feet. Many had knotted cords twisted round their heads, and drawn so tight that they cut into the brain. Many were thrown into dungeons with adders, serpents, toads, and other venomous creatures. Others were placed in the torture-chamber;‡ that is, in a kind of chest which was short and narrow, and not very deep, paved with sharp stones; in this the victims were frequently pressed until their limbs were broken.

"In many of the castles there were huge chains, so heavy that they could not be lifted by three men: the victim on whom they were placed was

* In the original, "And pined heom untel lendlice penning, for ne wæron nævre nan martyrs swa pined alse hig wæron." The old Saxon phrase "to pine," used for the infliction of judicial torture, is preserved in the Scottish proverb,

"If he hasna gear to fine,
He has shins to pine."

† In orig. "Me henged up bi the fet, and smoked hem mid ful smoke."

‡ In orig. "Crucet-hus."

kept standing erect, by an iron collar fixed in a beam, so that he could neither sit down, nor recline, nor sleep. Many thousands were starved to death.* It is impossible to relate all the wounds and wrongs that the lords wreaked upon the land during the nineteen years that Stephen reigned; and ever it was worse and worse. They imposed heavy tributes on the towns, which they called *tunserie*.† When the citizens had nothing more to give, they pillaged and burned the towns. Thou mightest go a day's journey, and not find a man sitting in a town, nor an acre of land tilled. Then was corn dear, and flesh, and butter; for to till the land was to plough the sea.‡ The poor died of hunger; and those who had formerly been rich, begged their bread from door to door. Whoever could escape fled from the country. Never did such evils befal the land: heathens would not have been so cruel as these lords. They did not spare the churches

* Starvation was introduced *regis ad exemplar*. In order to enforce the surrender of the castle of Devizes, which was held by the brave but not over-pious bishop of Ely, Stephen seized on that prelate's uncle, the bishop of Winchester, and his brother, the bishop of Lincoln, and vowed that they should neither eat nor drink until Devizes was surrendered. The two prelates were famished almost to death before their relative could be induced to obey the royal summons.

† In Old French, the verb *tunser* or *tenser* signifies "to punish."

‡ Stephen's barons had found effective checks for the modern bugbears, over-production and over-population.

§ In orig. "Sume jeden on ælmes the waren sume wile rice men."

or church-yards, but seized all that they could find in them, and then burned the church. If two or three horsemen were seen approaching a town, all the inhabitants fled, believing that they were robbers.* The land was ruined by such deeds; our most fertile soil was barren as the sand. They derided the divine wrath, for they said openly that Christ and all his saints were asleep. Such, and even worse than this, we endured nineteen years for our sins."†

Although the compressive force of the feudal system prevented any insurrection of the peasants, it is improbable that they should have endured such outrages without seeking some means of revenge. Accordingly we find that bands of robbers abounded in the country, who treated all the lords and ladies who fell into their hands with the utmost brutality; that the battles between Stephen and Henry were more than usually sanguinary, for the knights and nobles who were dismounted or wounded had their throats cut by the foot-soldiers. But when the nobles found it necessary to make a stand against the increasing power of the crown, and the perverse passion of so many of the Plantagenets for introducing new hordes of foreigners into the kingdom, they were forced to conciliate the people,

* "Gif twa men other thre coman ridend to an tun, al the tunscipe flugoen for heom, wenend that hi wœron rœveres."

† Saxon Chronicle, Gibson's edition, 238—240.—It deserves to be noticed, that the Saxon text is of a metrical structure, which adds greatly to its effect.

lest in their despair they should "fly from petty tyrants to the throne." It was only when the English monarchs were feeble or minors, that the peasants of this country were goaded into insurrection.

Cruel as the Normans showed themselves in England, they were even worse in their native duchy; which, during the whole period of its connection with the English monarchy, was constantly the scene of anarchy, outrage, and crime. We are told that Robert de Belesme, count of Alençon, surpassed all his contemporaries in cruelty, as much as in talent and ambition. "After he had pillaged a country," says the old historian, "he destroyed with fire everything which he could not take away. It was his pleasure to mutilate and torture the unhappy knights or peasants who fell into his hands; so sanguinary was his disposition, that he preferred witnessing the tortures of his captives to enriching himself by their ransoms."* The Martels, counts of Anjou, and ancestors of the Plantagenets, were equally infamous for their rapacity; they entered into alliance with troops of banditti, to whom they granted shelter on condition of obtaining a share of their plunder.† It was owing to the strength of their castles that these nobles were able to perpetrate such crimes with impunity; for, as we have already said, the arts of attack were so

* Order. Vital. lib. xi.

† Chron. Sanct. Andeg. in Script. Franc. xii.

little understood in those days, that fortifications which would now be deemed inconsiderable stood long sieges, and often baffled the efforts of powerful monarchs.*

We have already said that the oppressions of the French nobility induced the people to support the despotic authority of the monarchs: passing over a long series of deeds of petty tyranny and feeble efforts of servile revenge, we come to the first general insurrection of the French peasantry, which claimed for itself the dignity of a crusade. When Louis IX. was taken prisoner in Egypt, the French peasants were enraged at the little anxiety to effect

* We have searched many chronicles to find an account of the siege of a castle which would illustrate the security which such a defence afforded to the feudal power of the nobility, and the excesses to which that power was carried. The following account, taken by Dr. Henry from a contemporary Life of king Stephen, seems best suited to that purpose:

"The castle of Exeter is built on a lofty mount, surrounded with impenetrable walls, strengthened with Cæsarean towers. In this castle Baldwin de Redvers placed a garrison composed of valiant youths, the flower of all England, to defend it against the king; to which he bound them by a solemn oath, and by putting under their protection his wife and children. When the king invested the castle, they mounted the walls in shining armour, and treated him and his army with scorn and defiance. Sometimes they sallied out from secret passages when least expected, and put many of the besiegers to the sword; sometimes they poured down showers of arrows, darts, and other weapons on the assailants. On the other hand, the king and his barons laboured with the greatest ardour to distress the garrison. Having formed a very strong and well-armed body of foot, he assaulted the barbican, and, after a fierce and bloody struggle,

his redemption exhibited both by the aristocracy and the clergy; they resolved to undertake the deliverance of their beloved sovereign themselves, and they planned a crusade in which neither noble nor priest was to have a share. It was spread abroad, that God had been offended by the luxury of the bishops and the pride of the nobles, and that He had summoned "the humble and meek" for the purpose of "putting down the mighty from their seats," and establishing a kingdom of righteousness. The enthusiasts who preached these doctrines found the peasants well prepared for their reception: a Hungarian, probably a slave, whose name is unknown, was the great leader of the

carried it. He next beat down with his engines the bridge of communication between the castle and the tower; after which, he erected lofty towers of wood, with wonderful art, to protect his men and enable them to return the discharges from the walls. In a word, he gave the besieged no rest night or day. Sometimes his men mounted on a machine supported by four wheels, approached the walls, and engaged hand to hand. Sometimes he drew up all the slingers of the army, and threw into the castle an intolerable shower of stones. Sometimes he employed the most skilful miners to undermine the foundations of the walls. He made use of machines of many different kinds; some of which were very lofty, for inspecting what they were doing within the castle; and others very low, for battering and beating down the walls. The besieged, making a bold and masterly defence, baffled all his machinations with the most astonishing dexterity and art. After this siege had lasted three months, and king Stephen had expended upon it, in machines, arms, and other things, no less than fifteen thousand marks, equal in efficacy to one hundred and fifty thousand pounds of our money, the besieged were obliged to surrender for want of water."

movement. He taught, that, as the glad tidings of salvation by Christ had been first revealed to shepherds in Palestine, so shepherds were now summoned to take the lead in the restoration of Christ's kingdom. He pretended to have received a letter from the blessed Virgin, declaring that shepherds were destined to recover the Holy Land, and commanding him to invite them to effect its deliverance. Crowds of disciples flocked to him; his followers, who assumed the name of Pasturers, or Pastorals, reverenced him as an inspired apostle: in every place which he visited, the peasants abandoned their flocks and herds, heedless of the remonstrances of their relatives, or the commands of their masters; they took no care for their support, but followed him with implicit submission to his guidance.

In a short time the bands of robbers, outlaws, fugitive slaves, and escaped criminals which infested France, and in such a period of disorder formed a very large proportion of the population, joined themselves to the Pasturers: the tumultuous crowds supplied themselves with arms; they lived at free quarters wherever they halted, and spread alarm over the entire kingdom. Their hatred of the priests and monks was unbounded: their preachers, who were both numerous and ardent, set aside all the established laws of ecclesiastical discipline; they permitted divorces, sanctioned marriages within the canonical degrees, and promulgated doctrines which were considered to be heretical. "They

described the preaching friars," says Matthew Paris, "as vagabonds and hypocrites; they averred that the monks of Cîteaux sought only to acquire lands and devour the flocks; they said that the black orders were composed of haughty gluttons, that the canons were mere epicures, that the bishops abandoned their sacred functions to indulge in secular ambition and avarice, and that the Roman court was the hotbed of scandals and abuses." The people, filled with hatred and contempt for the clergy, received these passionate declamations with loud applause, and supplied armed bands to prevent their favourite preachers from being interrupted. On the other hand, the priests and monks denounced the Pasturers from the pulpits, and gave their preachers the whimsical nickname of the "Devil's Mousetraps."*

The bishop of Orleans, having learned that the Pasturers were approaching that city, ordered the gates to be closed against them; but the mob set him at defiance, and admitted the rustic crowd. A preacher led them on to the market-place, where he harangued the mixed multitude of rustics and citizens on the crimes of the existing clergy, and on the divine summons which had been sent to the shepherds, inviting them to reform Christianity. A student of the university, disgusted by such a display of ignorant fanaticism, came up to the preacher, and said in a loud voice, "Silence, fel-

* Matthew Paris, p. 711.

low! you are a liar and a wicked heretic; you are misleading this deluded and innocent people by the most atrocious falsehoods!" One of the Pasturers was so provoked that he struck the unfortunate youth dead with a hatchet. As usual, the sight of blood exasperated all the bad passions of the multitude: a cry was raised to exterminate the priests; they were hunted through the streets, torn from their houses, and dragged from their altars. Twenty-five of them were drowned in the Loire, amid the exulting shouts of an infuriate populace; and several others were wounded, or severely injured. The bishop placed the city under an interdict; which was, however, removed when the Pasturers evacuated it to continue their route. It soon appeared that the outrage at Orleans had shown the danger of allowing such a movement to be continued: excommunications were published against the Pasturers in every diocese; and Blanche, the queen-regent, who had hitherto favoured them on account of their proclaimed determination to effect the release of her son from captivity, gave orders that they should be hunted down and destroyed.

The insurgents, divided into several bands, were spread over the kingdom; but the principal body, headed by their mysterious leader, marched to Paris, and found a favourable reception in the capital. One day, whilst he preached to a numerous auditory, and displayed to them the closed hand

which was supposed to hold the letter of the Virgin Mary, an executioner, employed by the queen, stole behind him in disguise, and struck off his head with a single blow. Before his hearers could recover from their surprise, they were charged by a body of cavalry, placed in ambush for the purpose: some were hewn down, others were trampled to death under the feet of the horses, and the rest, flinging away their weapons, dispersed on all sides. In the moment of consternation, the ministers of government, the priests, and the agents of power throughout the kingdom proclaimed that the Pasturers had been instigated by the devil, bribed by the sultan of Egypt, and aided by the delusions of witchcraft; their ill-success was received as a full confirmation of these calumnies: the very citizens who had been foremost in welcoming them took the lead in their destruction; "they hunted them down with the ardour of blood-hounds," and slaughtered without mercy all who fell into their hands.*

The rapid increase of the royal power, and the progress of commerce and manufactures, had at first the effect of rendering the position of the peasants throughout France even worse than it had been in the rampant days of feudalism. Nobles, humiliated by the ministers of the crown and royal governors of provinces, vented their spleen on their wretched dependents; rapacious and lux-

* Duchesne, v. 358.

urious lords, constrained by the progress of social order to abstain from piracy and robbery, but still anxious to acquire the rich stuffs or precious ornaments imported by the merchants, increased their exactions from their vassals, who had no longer any hope of escape. The cessation of private wars had rendered men of less value to the aristocracy: a fugitive serf no more possessed the chance of being enlisted and protected by some rival of his former lord; he was claimed and restored more readily than a strayed sheep or ox, and cruelly tortured to prevent others from following his example. The insurrection of the Pasturers was still more injurious to the wretched peasants: it had alarmed the nobles, and, as no passion is more basely cruel than fear, it had led them to increase their tyranny, and to watch for the least symptom of disobedience with the most vigilant suspicion; it had afforded the clergy a pretext for representing all efforts to procure the emancipation of the working classes as intimately associated with irreligion and infidelity; and it had alienated the rising middle class of merchants and traders, by showing the dangers to which their properties would be exposed in the unbridled fury of a popular insurrection. The peasants had no means of forming associations amongst themselves, and there were none above them to whom they could appeal for sympathy.

Fanaticism is the only bond of association by

which an ignorant and brutalized population can be engaged in a united movement. About seventy years after the insurrection of the Pasturers, a priest and a monk, who were said to have been degraded for some ecclesiastical offence, began to prophesy that God had promised the reconquest of Jerusalem, and the deliverance of the Holy Land, to shepherds and the "poor in spirit." It is impossible to describe the enthusiasm with which the peasants throughout France ran after the pretended prophets: shepherds, labourers, boys, not more than thirteen or fourteen years old, abandoned their flocks and their occupations to run after the pretended prophets. Their followers soon amounted to several thousands. Moneyless, half-naked, and half-starved, they followed the standard of the cross, marching two by two in silence; they traversed cities and villages without committing any disorder, supporting themselves by alms collected at the doors of the churches. Charitable contributions afforded them sufficient support for some time; but this resource at length failed, and at the same time the numbers of those who joined this new Pastoral crusade were greatly increased. Hunger, of course, drove them to commit excesses; they began to seize on provisions wherever they could be found. The landed proprietors applied to the magistrates, and they gave orders that the Pasturers should be seized and hanged wherever there was a sufficient force to seize them. On the

other hand, the shepherds attacked the prisons in which their brethren were confined, and in most cases succeeded in setting them at liberty. Thus, all the royal prisons in Paris were forced; the government was too feeble to assert its supremacy, and the insurgents were permitted to march from the capital into Aquitaine without interruption. From this province they proceeded into Languedoc, where their fanaticism was directed against the Jews, whom they pillaged and slaughtered without mercy. The Jews of the diocese of Toulouse were permitted to take shelter in the royal castle of Verdun on the Garonne: they were soon closely besieged, and the king's officers could not induce a single Christian soldier to aid in their defence. After repeated attacks, the Pasturers forced an entrance, and fired the tower in which the unhappy objects of their rage sought shelter: the Jews threw their children over the walls, in the hope that their tender age might excite compassion; but the frantic enthusiasts slaughtered them without mercy in the sight of their parents perishing in the flames.*

Similar scenes were enacted in several other places. At length the fanatical bands menaced Avignon, then the seat of the papal court: the pope, terrified at their approach, published a bull of excommunication against all who should take the cross before a crusade should be duly autho-

* Hist. Gén. de Languedoc, iv. 29.

rized by the church, and summoned the seneschal of Beaucaire to oppose the fanatical multitude by force. The seneschal of Carcasonne adopted still more vigorous measures: when the Pasturers took the route towards the sea for the purpose of embarking at Aigues-Mortes, this vigorous governor placed a strong garrison in the town, and with a numerous army blocked up the roads in their rear. Blockaded in the pestilential plains of Aigues-Mortes, destitute of provisions, of clothing, and of guidance, the Pasturers were mowed down by famine and disease, whilst all the stragglers who were intercepted expiated their insanity on the gibbet. A few only contrived to make their escape; most of those whom misery spared fell by the hands of the executioner, or the revenge of the citizens whom they had plundered.*

These misguided men were in fact instigated to their misdeeds by the fanaticism of the very rulers who thus hunted them down as wild beasts. At the very time when the popular hatred against the Jews was at the highest, pope John XXII. issued bulls commanding the inquisitors in Languedoc to proceed vigorously against the detestable blasphemies of the Jews, and to make rigid inquiries into the practices of magicians, sorcerers, and dealers in forbidden arts. In the following year,† Philip the Long, king of France, exhibited one of

* Sismondi, Hist. des Franc. ix. 393.

† A. D. 1321.

the most deplorable and scandalous results of ignorant fanaticism which can be found in the history of the fourteenth century. We shall briefly relate this lamentable episode, to explain rather than excuse the fanaticism of the illiterate Pasturers.

The crusaders, on their return from the Levant, had brought back with them the disease of leprosy, which soon became endemic in France. Medicine, like all other arts, was in a very low state during the middle ages: it was generally believed that leprosy was an incurable disease; and, as all diseases of the skin were included in this generic name, great alarm was excited by the belief in its spreading contagion. Hospitals for lepers, or lazarettos, were erected at the gates of all the large cities; the inmates were regarded with an aversion which amounted to superstitious horror. It was natural that the unhappy objects of popular contempt and hatred should feel acutely the misery of their position, and answer the contumelies of all who passed their gates by threats and reproaches. This was quite sufficient to rouse the suspicions of fanaticism: a report was spread abroad that the lepers had formed a plot for the destruction of the healthy population throughout Christendom; that delegates from the different hospitals of Europe, with the exception of those of England, had held four general councils to mature their designs; and that they had even com-

menced to put their plans into execution. An insurrection of the diseased against the healthy, and of hospitals against houses, would seem to be too monstrous an absurdity for credulity itself; but Philip the Long was a superstitious coward, and no tale of horror was too extravagant for his diseased judgment and gloomy imagination.

The states of the realm were convoked at Poictiers: they had scarcely commenced their session when a report was presented to the king, stating in substance "that all the fountains and wells in Aquitaine were in the course of being poisoned by the lepers; that several of the criminals convicted of the offence had been seized and burned; and that, before they were committed to the flames, they had made confession of having engaged in a plot to poison the waters throughout Christendom, but particularly in France and Germany, for the purpose of destroying all Christians, or reducing them to the same condition as themselves." Philip received this strange story with implicit faith, and addressed circulars to the magistrates, commanding them to make the strictest inquisition into the conspiracy, and to spare no means by which its nature and extent might be ascertained.

A system of torture will obtain proofs of any absurdity which malice prepense or perverted reason can devise; the unfortunate lepers, extended on the rack, confessed everything which the judges pleased to dictate. Two different accounts are given of

the composition of the poison: in one examination it was said to be compounded of human blood, "rose-water," and three sorts of herbs, the names of which were unknown to the tortured deponents; to these were added a consecrated host, but the means by which this was to be procured do not appear: the several ingredients, having been mixed, were to be thoroughly dried before a fire, and then ground to powder: a small quantity of this powdered mixture, enclosed in a bag, was declared sufficient to poison any spring or well in the kingdom. The second form of poisonous compound was found in a bag, which a leprous woman threw away when she was very closely pursued: the bag contained an adder's head, a toad's leg, and some woman's hair, saturated in a kind of pickle, exceedingly fetid and noisome. The efficacy of these poisons was not tested by any experiments on men or animals; they were merely thrown on a brasier of burning charcoal, and, as they were not immediately consumed, their destructive nature was believed to be demonstrated. It may add to our astonishment at this strange delusion, that in no part of the investigation is there any attempt to show that even a single individual had perished by poison, or that there was a well or fountain in France which had ever caused the slightest inconvenience to any one who drank of its waters.

The royal, the seignorial, and the ecclesiastical judges vied with each other in the persecution of

the unhappy lepers: as is usual in these cases of general delusion, the credit of the first absurd story was supported by the invention of several others, still more extravagant. The king of Granada was denounced as the first contriver of the plot: it was announced that he had employed the Jews as his agents to effect the destruction of Christianity; and that these, not having the courage to make the attempt themselves, had engaged the lepers to execute the king's designs. New objects were thus furnished for the ferocity of fanaticism: the royal tribunals at first claimed the exclusive right of trying the accused; but their multitude was too great, and the king himself issued an edict, granting, of special grace, the right of investigating "the foul treason against Christendom" to all the inferior jurisdictions in his dominions. Some historians quote as a proof of his singular mildness and mercy that he only allowed the guilty lepers to be sent to the stake; that he granted to lepresses the privilege of a jury of matrons before the day for their execution should be finally determined; and that he commanded those who were acquitted to be shut up in the lazarettos, and strictly secluded from all commerce with mankind.

The persecution of the Jews, accused of complicity in this imaginary plot, was not less cruel than that of the lepers; it would appear as if it had been sufficient criminality in both to be defenceless. In general, there was not even a form of trial

when a Jew, or a person with a diseased skin, fell into the hands of the fanatics. "In several provinces," says the Continuator of Nangis, whose authority we have chiefly followed in this horrible episode,"* and especially in Aquitaine, all those who were arrested were burned, without any distinction. In the district of Tours, and at a royal castle named Chinon, they dug an immense ditch, in which they piled an enormous quantity of faggots, where they burned an hundred and sixty Jews, of both sexes, together. Several of the victims voluntarily threw themselves into the flames, singing hymns of joy, as if they had been going to a marriage. Many of the women threw their infants into the burning pile, to save them from being baptized and brought up as Christians by the nobles and others who assisted at the execution. None were burned in Paris but those whose guilt was judicially established; the rest were only condemned to perpetual banishment. Some amongst the richer portion of the Jews were detained in prison until the amount of the mortgages which they held had been ascertained; and these, with the rest of their goods, were confiscated to the crown. From these spoils the king is said to have obtained the sum of fifty thousand livres."* Well and wisely did old Fuller remark in a similar case, "It is cause and reason enough to bring a sheep to the shambles that he be fat."

In the midst of these persecutions Philip died,

* Contin. Nangii, 78, 79.

and was succeeded by his brother Charles IV., the last of the ancient Capetian line. The new monarch was anxious to put an end to the persecutions, of which he had discovered the injustice; but such was the strength of the popular prejudice that he could only interfere in behalf of such lepers and Jews as had been acquitted, graciously permitting them the privilege of not being starved to death. But the pope more effectually shielded the sufferers, by giving a new direction to fanaticism: he published several bulls, denouncing the practice of magic and sorcery, with which he strangely connected the heresy of the begging order of the Franciscans, who taught that Christ, like St. Francis, had taken the vow of voluntary poverty, and that therefore all his ministers were bound to resign all temporal dignities and possessions.* Several brethren and sisters of the order were burned alive for preaching these doctrines, which menaced destruction to the whole edifice of ecclesiastical power. It is doubtful, however, whether the Franciscans might not have been supported in a creed so likely to be popular with the laity, had not a singular incident alarmed all France by the danger of witchcraft. Some persons passing the castle of Landon, which appears to have been in ruins and abandoned, were terrified by hearing strange and unusual shrieks from a subterranean dungeon. Search was made, and a black cat was discovered, shut up in a box

* Raynaldi Annal. 1323.

or casket. All France was alarmed; numbers of unfortunate persons were arrested and brought before the tribunals of Paris to give some explanation respecting the cat. At length it was discovered that an abbé of Cîteaux and some of his canons had enclosed the animal in this box, with provisions for three days, intending at the end of that time to employ the cat as a magical agent in the discovery of stolen goods. Two of the monks were burned alive on this charge, and several others sent into exile; while the pope fulminated fresh bulls against sorcerers and necromancers, exhorting all good Christians to denounce those who were suspected of so horrible a crime.

Most of the historians who have recorded very minutely the crimes and absurdities of the Pastoral insurrections, and of the great revolt of the French peasantry in the fourteenth century, have forgotten to say anything about the examples of cruelty and fanaticism set to these poor people by their rulers, and by all the authorities, civil and ecclesiastical, which they had been taught to respect. In equal silence they pass over the dreadful oppression practised by the feudal lords on their vassals, and the aggravation of their miseries during the civil wars which devastated France after the accession of the house of Valois. In most of the provinces the peasants had begun to live together in hamlets or villages, and had thus been enabled in some degree to associate for mutual defence; but the utmost which they effected by

their combination, was some security against wolves and isolated bands of robbers. But the king, who insisted that the villagers should lodge and feed his troops whenever he pleased to quarter his soldiers upon them, — the feudal lords, who claimed to take when they pleased the corn from their little stores, the flocks from their folds, and even their daughters from their cottages if they possessed any personal attractions, — were obstinate in refusing their permission to fortify their villages, or to practise the use of arms for their defence. It was the necessary consequence that the villagers were at the mercy of every troop, whether friends or enemies, which traversed their lands; that the attendants of every great lord seized what provision he pleased for the table of his master, while the immediate lord of the unhappy peasant did not abate one tittle of his exactions in consequence of the plunder perpetrated by others. These things must be borne in mind when we come to read Froissart's fearful account of the Jacquerie. The good knight had no sympathy for the peasants; he looked upon them as nothing better than the beasts of the field, whose destiny and duty it was to endure whatever treatment it pleased their masters to use towards them; and he speaks of their dreadful retributions on their oppressors as unprovoked and unparalleled outrages, offered by the brutal and base to the honourable and noble.* This very

* Sir Walter Scott, in the tale of Old Mortality, introduces Claverhouse describing the character of Froissart to his prisoner

fact, however, may serve in no small degree to prove the habitual tyranny exercised by the nobles, when a historian like Froissart coolly passes over, as unworthy of notice, the fearful wrongs by which the peasants were provoked to the retaliatory horrors he describes. The passage is usually quoted to depict the brutalities that may be expected from the insurrections of an ignorant multitude; but we insert it to inculcate a lesson with which it is not less pregnant,—the peril of goading the multitude to such an extreme as to render revolt the last forlorn hope of the wretched.

"Soon after the deliverance of the king of Na-

Morton. It is to be regretted that this admirable writer did not add some comment, to show his detestation of the moral code that would exclude the poor and the humble from the rights of humanity.

"Did you ever read Froissart?"

"No," was Morton's answer.

"I have half a mind," said Claverhouse, "to contrive you should have six months' imprisonment, in order to procure you that pleasure. His chapters inspire me with more enthusiasm than even poetry itself. And the noble canon, with what true chivalrous feeling he confines his beautiful expressions of sorrow to the death of the gallant and high-bred knight, of whom it was a pity to see the fall; such was his loyalty to his king, pure faith to his religion, hardihood towards his enemy, and fidelity to his lady-love! Ah, benedicite! how he will mourn over the fall of such a pearl of knighthood, be it on the side he happens to favour, or on the other. But, truly, for sweeping from the face of the earth some few hundred of villain churls, who are born but to plough it, the high-born and inquisitive historian has marvellous little sympathy—as little, or perhaps less, than Grahme of Claverhouse."

varre out of prison, a marvellous and great tribulation befel the kingdom of France in Beauvoisis, Brie, upon the river Marne, in the Laonnois, and in the neighbourhood of Soissons. Some of the inhabitants of the country towns assembled together in Beauvoisis without any leader, and they were not at first more than one hundred men. They said that the nobles of the kingdom of France, knights and squires, were a disgrace to it, and that it would be a very meritorious act to destroy them all; to which proposition every one assented as a truth, and added, Shame befal him that should be the means of preventing the gentlemen from being wholly destroyed! They then, without further council, collected themselves in a body, and with no other arms than the staves shod with iron which some had, and others with knives, marched to the house of a knight who lived near, murdered the knight, his lady, and all the children, both great and small; they then burnt the house.

"After this, their second expedition was to the strong castle of another knight, which they took; and, having tied him to a stake, many of them violated his wife and daughter before his eyes: they then murdered the lady, her daughter, and the other children, and, last of all, the knight himself, with much cruelty. They destroyed and burnt his castle. They did the like to many castles and handsome houses; and their numbers increased so

much, that there were in a short time upwards of six thousand. Wherever they went, they received additions, for all of their rank in life followed them; whilst every one else fled, carrying off with them their ladies, damsels, and children, ten or twenty leagues distant, where they thought they could place them in security, leaving their houses with all their riches in them.

"These wicked people, without leader and without arms, plundered and burnt all the houses they came to, murdered every gentleman, and violated every lady and damsel they could find. He who committed the most atrocious actions, and such as no human creature could have imagined, was the most applauded, and considered as the greatest man among them. I dare not write the horrible and inconceivable atrocities they committed on the persons of the ladies.

"Among other infamous acts, they murdered a knight, and, having fastened him to a spit, roasted him before the eyes of his wife and his children; and, after ten or twelve had violated her, they forced her to eat some of her husband's flesh, and then knocked her brains out. They had chosen a king among them who came from Clermont in Beauvoisis; he was elected as the worst of the bad, and they denominated him James Goodman (*Jacques Bon Homme*). These wretches burnt and destroyed in the county of Beauvoisis, and at Corbie, Amiens, and Montdidier, upwards of sixty good

houses and strong castles. By the acts of such traitors in the county of Brie, and thereabout, it behoved every lady, knight, and squire, having the means of escape, to fly to Meaux, if they wished to preserve themselves from being insulted and afterwards murdered.

"The duchess of Normandy, the duchess of Orleans, and many other ladies, had adopted this course to save themselves from violation.

"These cursed people thus supported themselves in the counties between Paris, Noyon, and Soissons, and in all the territory of Coucy in the county of Valois. In the bishoprics of Noyon, Laon, and Soissons there were upwards of one hundred castles and good houses of knights and squires destroyed.

"When the gentlemen of Beauvoisis, Corbie, Vermandois, and of the lands where these wretches were associated, saw to what lengths their madness had extended, they sent for succour to their friends in Hainault, Flanders, and Bohemia; from which places numbers soon came, and united themselves with the gentlemen of the country. They began, therefore, to kill and destroy these wretches wherever they met them, and hung them up by troops on the nearest trees. The king of Navarre even destroyed in one day, near Clermont in Beauvoisis, upwards of three thousand; but they were by this time so much increased in number, that, had they been all together,

they would have amounted to more than one hundred thousand. When they were asked for what reason they acted so wickedly, they replied they knew not, but that they did so because they saw others do it, and they thought by this means they should destroy all the nobles and gentlemen in the world.

"At this period the duke of Normandy, suspecting the king of Navarre, the provost of merchants, and those of his faction, for they were always unanimous in their sentiments, set out from Paris, and went to the bridge at Charenton-upon-Marne, where he issued a special summons for the attendance of the crown vassals, and sent a defiance to the provost of merchants, and to all those who should support him. The provost, being fearful he would return in the night-time to Paris, (which was then uninclosed,) collected as many workmen as possible from all parts, and employed them to make ditches quite round Paris. He also surrounded it by a wall with strong gates. For the space of one year there were three hundred workmen daily employed, the expense of which was equal to maintaining an army. I must say, that to surround with a sufficient defence such a city as Paris was an act of greater utility than any provost of merchants had ever done before; for, otherwise, it would have been plundered and destroyed several times by the different factions.

"At the time these wicked men were overrun-

ning the country, the earl of Foix, and his cousin the captal of Buch, were returning from a croisade in Prussia. They were informed, on their entering France, of the distress the nobles were in; and they learnt, at the city of Chalons, that the duchess of Normandy, the duchess of Orleans, and three hundred other ladies, under the protection of the duke of Orleans, were fled to Meaux on account of these disturbances. The two knights resolved to go to the assistance of these ladies, and to reinforce them with all their might, notwithstanding the captal was attached to the English; but at this time there was a truce between the two kings. They might have in their company about sixty lances. They were most cheerfully received on their arrival at Meaux by the ladies and damsels, for these Jacks and peasants of Brie had heard what a number of ladies, married and unmarried, and young children of quality, were in Meaux; they had united themselves with those of Valois, and were on the road thither. On the other hand, those of Paris had also been informed of the treasures Meaux contained, and had set out from that place in crowds: having met the others, they amounted together to nine thousand men; their forces were augmenting every step they advanced.

"They came to the gates of the town, which the inhabitants opened to them, and allowed them to enter: they did so in such numbers that all the streets were quite filled as far as the market-place,

which is tolerably strong, but it required to be guarded, though the river Marne nearly surrounds it. The noble dames who were lodged there, seeing such multitudes rushing towards them, were greatly frightened. On this, the two lords and their company advanced to the gates of the market-place, which they had opened; and marching under the banners of the earl of Foix and the duke of Orleans, and the pennon of the captal of Buch, posted themselves in front of this peasantry, who were badly armed.

"When these banditti perceived such a troop of gentlemen, so well equipped, sally forth to guard the market-place, the foremost of them began to fall back. The gentlemen then followed them, using their lances and swords. When they felt the weight of their blows, they, through fear, turned about so fast they fell one over the other. All manner of armed persons then rushed out of the barriers, drove them before them, striking them down like beasts, and clearing the town of them, for they kept neither regularity nor order, slaying so many that they were tired. They flung them in great heaps into the river; in short, they killed upwards of seven thousand. Not one would have escaped if they had chosen to pursue them further.

"On the return of the men-at-arms, they set fire to the town of Meaux, burnt it; and all the peasants they could find were shut up in it, because they had been of the party of the Jacks. Since

this discomfiture, which happened to them at Meaux, they never collected again in any great bodies; for the young Enguerrand de Coucy had plenty of gentlemen under his orders, who destroyed them, wherever they could be met with, without mercy." *

So far the knightly historian has told us "of the marvellous and great tribulation which befel the kingdom of France;" and, were his account to be left without further explanation, it might, as it often has been, be quoted in favour of chastising those with scorpions who evince impatience of chastisement with whips: but a closer inquiry into the Jacquerie will leave a very different impression on the mind. We have seen its remote causes in ignorance, evil example, and oppression; let us now investigate the immediate agents in the explosion. In France, as in other countries, the inflammable materials of insurrection may be accumulated for centuries without their existence being discovered or even suspected, until some peculiar conjuncture of affairs kindles the mass into wide-spreading conflagration.

After the battle of Poictiers an immense number of the French nobles and knights became prisoners to the English: according to the custom of the time, they were held to ransom, and were liberated on parole for the purpose of collecting the sums fixed as the price of their release. They returned

* Froissart, Smith's edition, vol. i. 240.

to their estates, determined not to sell any portion of their lands, but to extort their ransoms from their unhappy vassals. The price fixed by the captors was very high; it averaged from one-fourth to one-half of the estimated value of the property of each prisoner. Were they to have sold their estates, it would have been difficult to have found purchasers; the persecution of the Jews, and the banishment of the Lombards, at that time the great money-lenders of Europe, rendered it impossible for them to borrow, even at a usurious rate: the peasants were then the only resource, and their lords made no scruple in appropriating to themselves their little earnings. They seized on all the movables of their unhappy vassals,—their grain, their flocks, and even their implements of husbandry; when these were not sufficient, they dragged the peasants to their castles, and subjected them to the most dreadful tortures for the purpose of compelling them to reveal the secret of any money they might have concealed. "Every thing was taken, everything was sent to the English, for the purpose of redeeming some gentlemen utterly useless to France; and, as there was not a noble family which had not some one or other of its members a prisoner, so there was not a single estate on which these horrible extortions were not practised."*

Up to this period, the peasants had viewed the

* Sismondi, x. 486.

affairs of the government, and the contest for the crown, with great indifference; but the obligation of paying ransoms for their masters led them to investigate the conduct of those whom they were compelled to redeem. They felt that they were the real sufferers from the calamities to which misgovernment had delivered the kingdom; that it was their toil which paid for the extravagant luxuries of the nobility: their jewelled ornaments, of which the lords were so proud, but which they had been unable to protect in the field of battle, were now shown by experience to have been wrung from the blood and tears of the cultivators of the soil. The exactions for ransom were still more grievously felt, because the great calamity of Poictiers had been manifestly caused by the sheer cowardice and poltroonery of the French knights and nobles, where some of them fled without waiting for the approach of the enemy, and others surrendered without striking a blow; thus saving their lives at the expense of their unhappy vassals.*

* Froissart, in his graphic account of the battle of Poictiers, states in strong terms the poltroonery displayed by the French nobles. We quote one passage as a specimen.

"When the battalion of the duke of Normandy (son to the king of France) saw the Black Prince advancing so quick upon them, they bethought themselves how to escape. The sons of the king, the duke of Normandy, the earl of Poitiers, and the earl of Touraine, who were very young, too easily believed what those under whose management they were placed said to them: however, the Lord Guiscard d'Angle, and Sir John de Saintré,

But, whilst the peasants were thus forming a most unfavourable opinion of their masters, the nobles, on the other hand, daily exhibited greater contempt for the peasants. Their misery became the subject of lordly jest: it was said, "*Jacques, bon homme*, does not like to part with his cash; but Jacques soon learns to pay when the scourge is his teacher."* This contemptuous nickname was

who were near the earl of Poitiers, would not fly, but rushed into the thickest of the combat. The three sons of the king, according to the advice given them, galloped away with upwards of eight hundred lances, who had never been near the enemy, and took the road to Chauvigny. When the Lord John de Landas, who with the Lord Theobald de Bodenay, and the Lord of St. Venant, were the guardians of the duke of Normandy, had fled with him a good league, they took leave of him, and besought the Lord of St. Venant not to quit him till they were all arrived at a place of safety; for, by doing thus, he would acquire more honour than if he were to remain on the field of battle. On their return they met the division of the duke of Orleans quite whole and unhurt, who had fled from behind the rear of the king's battalion. True it is that there were many good knights and squires among them, who, notwithstanding the flight of their leaders, had much rather have suffered death than the smallest reproach. You have heard before related in this history the battle of Crecy, and how fortune was marvellously unfavourable to the French. They had equal ill-luck at the battle of Poitiers, for the French men-at-arms were at least seven to one. It must, therefore, be looked upon as very unfortunate that with this advantage they could not gain the field from their enemies."—Froissart, Smith's edition, i. 210.

* It was a proverb in that age, "Oignez vilain, il vous poindra; poignez vilain, il vous oindra:" which may be translated,

Caress a peasant, and he 'll sting you;
Sting him, and presents rich he 'll bring you.

applied to the peasantry throughout France; and never was the Hindú proverb more completely exemplified, that "the shaft of contempt will pierce through the shell of the tortoise:" the insult, added to injury, roused the most stupid, and exasperated the most patient.

The labouring class, so wondrously patient and long-suffering, was soon exposed to another calamity: the battle of Poictiers had been followed by a treaty of peace; a multitude of soldiers, belonging to the English and French armies, having no longer pay or employment, spread themselves over the country, and relied for support on extortion and pillage: there was nowhere an established government, and there was no protection for persons or properties. Those who resided in cities or strong castles were in general able to make some defence; but the open villages could offer no resistance, and were almost daily laid waste by bands of marauders. Several of the leaders of these banditti, or "free companies," as they were called, belonged to noble families; pillage and robbery were regarded as pardonable modes of life, if not among the most legitimate of knightly accomplishments. Froissart relates some enterprizes undertaken by these honourable leaders, and the tone of his narrative sufficiently illustrates the loose morality of the times.

"About this period, a knight, named Sir Arnold de Crevole, but more commonly called the Arch-

priest, collected a large body of men-at-arms, who came from all parts; seeing that their pay would not be continued in France, and that, since the capture of the king, there was not any probability of their gaining any more in that country. They marched first into Provence, where they took many strong towns and castles, and ruined the country by their robberies as far as Avignon. Pope Innocent VI., who resided in Avignon, was much alarmed; as, not knowing what might be the intentions of the Archpriest, the leader of these forces, and for fear of personal insult, he and the cardinals kept their households armed day and night. When the Archpriest and his troops had pillaged all the country, the pope and clergy entered into treaty with him. Having received proper security, he and the greater part of his people entered Avignon, where he was received with as much respect as if he had been son to the king of France. He dined many times with the pope and cardinals, who gave him absolution from all his sins; and, at his departure, they presented him with forty thousand crowns to distribute among his companions. These men therefore marched away to different places, following, however, the directions of the Archpriest.

"At this time, also, there was another company of men-at-arms, or robbers, collected from all parts, who stationed themselves between the rivers Loire and Seine, so that no one dared to travel between

Paris and Orleans, nor between Paris and Montargis, or even to remain in the country; the inhabitants of the plains had all fled to Paris and Orleans. This company had chosen for their leader a Welchman, named Buffin, whom they had knighted, and who had acquired such immense riches as could not be counted. These companies advanced one day near to Paris, another towards Orleans, another time to Chartres; and there was no town or fortress but what was taken and pillaged, excepting such as were strongly garrisoned. St. Arnout,* Galardon,† Bronmaulx, Aloes, Estampes,‡ Chartres,§ Montlehery,‖ Plouviers in the Gatinois, Milly,¶ Larchant,** Chatillon,†† Montargis,‡‡ Yssieres, were plundered; and so many other towns that it would be difficult to recount them all.

"They rode over the country in parties of twenty, thirty, or forty, meeting with none to check their pillage; while on the sea-coast of Normandy there was a still greater number of English and Navarrois

* A town in Beauce, election of Dourdan.

† A town in Beauce, election of Chartres.

‡ A city in Beauce, thirteen leagues from Paris.

§ A city of Orleanois, capital of Beauce, twenty-two leagues from Paris.

‖ A town in the Isle of France, seven leagues from Paris.

¶ A market-town in Gatinois.

** St. Mathurin de Larchant, a town in Gatinois.

†† A town in Beauce, election of Châteaudun.

‡‡ Capital of Gatinois, twenty-seven leagues and a half from Paris.

plunderers and robbers. Sir Robert Knolles was their leader, who conquered every town and castle he came to, as there was no one to oppose him. Sir Robert had followed this trade for some time, and by it gained upwards of one hundred thousand crowns. He kept a great many soldiers in his pay, and, being very liberal, he was cheerfully followed and obeyed."

When the villagers were taken prisoners by these captains, they were tortured until they gave up their wealth: if, as was frequently the case, they had not the means of gratifying the rapacity of the plunderers, they were massacred without mercy. The suburbs of Paris were crowded with wretched peasants who had been forced to abandon their huts; they hoped to find shelter in the capital, but their presence only brought accumulated distress to the Parisians, whom the general abandonment of agriculture already menaced with famine. Nor were the peasants alone in their sufferings: the sanctity of convents and monasteries afforded no protection against the titled brigands; the nuns of Poissy and Longchamp, the monks of Melun and St. Antoine, the Franciscans of St. Marcel, and, in short, the inhabitants of all the monasteries situated without the walls, abandoned their cloisters and altars to seek shelter in Paris.

The peasants, as Froissart has related, at length took up arms, not to support any political party, but to exterminate their oppressors: he has not

exaggerated the outrages which they committed; had not their progress been checked, they would have destroyed the whole body of the French nobility. But, though the Jacquerie as a general movement was suppressed, partial insurrection continued to burst forth occasionally in the provinces for a long series of years; plague, pestilence, and famine were added to the horrors of war; and it was not until long after the expulsion of the English that even the semblance of tranquillity was restored to the unhappy country.

CHAPTER IV.

Insurrections of the Peasantry against the Feudal Lords, continued.—Wat Tyler's revolt: commotions raised by Jack Cade.

THE history of the English Jacquerie is told by Froissart in the same unfair and heartless manner which he displays in his relation of the insurrection of the French peasantry; but his narrative is so graphic, that we shall extract it, and then supply its deficiencies from other sources.

"About this time there happened in England great commotions among the lower ranks of the people, by which England was near ruined without resource.

"Never was a country in such jeopardy as this was at that period, *and all through the too great comfort of the commonalty.* Rebellion was stirred up, as it was formerly done in France, by the Jacques Bonhommes, who did much evil, and sore troubled the kingdom of France. It is marvellous from what a trifle this pestilence raged in England. In order that it may serve as an example to mankind, I shall speak of all that was done, from the information I had at the time on the subject.

"It is customary in England, as well as in several other countries, for the nobility to have great privileges over the commonalty, whom they keep in bondage; that is to say, they are bound by law and custom to plough the lands of gentlemen, to harvest the grain, to carry it home to the barn, to thrash and winnow it; they are also bound to harvest the hay and carry it home. All these services they are obliged to perform for their lords, and many more in England than in other countries.

"The prelates and gentlemen are thus served.

"In the counties of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Bedford, these services are more oppressive than in any other part of the kingdom.

"The evil-disposed in these districts began to rise, saying they were too severely oppressed; that at the beginning of the world there were no slaves, and that no one ought to be treated as such, unless he had committed treason against his lord, as Lucifer had done against God; but that they had done no such thing, for they were neither angels nor spirits, but men formed after the same likeness as their lords, who treated them as beasts. This they would not longer bear, but had determined to be free; and if they laboured, or did any other works for their lords, they would be paid for it.

"A crazy priest in the county of Kent, called John Ball, who for his absurd preaching had been thrice confined in the prison of the archbishop of Canterbury, was greatly instrumental in inflaming

them with those ideas. He was accustomed, every Sunday after mass, as the people were coming out of the church, to preach to them in the market-place, and assemble a crowd around him, to whom he would say, 'My good friends, things cannot go on well in England, nor ever will, until everything shall be in common; when there shall neither be vassal nor lord, and all distinctions levelled; when the lords shall be no more masters than ourselves. How ill have they used us, and for what reason do they thus hold us in bondage? Are we not all descended from the same parents, Adam and Eve? And what can they show, and what reasons give, why they should be more the masters than ourselves; except, perhaps, in making us labour and work for them to spend? They are clothed in velvets and rich stuffs, ornamented with ermine and other furs, while we are forced to wear poor cloth.

"'They have wines, spices, and fine bread, while we have only rye and refuse of the straw; and, if we drink, it must be water. They have handsome seats and manors, when we must brave the wind and rain in our labours in the field; but it is from our labour they have wherewith to support their pomp. We are called slaves, and, if we do not perform our services, we are beaten; and we have not any sovereign to whom we can complain, or who wishes to hear us and do us justice. Let us go to the king, who is young, and remonstrate with him on our servitude; telling him we must have it

otherwise, or we shall find a remedy for it ourselves. If we wait on him in a body, all those who come under the appellation of slaves, or are held in bondage, will follow us in the hopes of being free. When the king shall see us, we shall obtain a favourable answer, or we must then seek ourselves to amend our condition.'

"With such words as these did John Ball harangue the people at his village every Sunday after mass; for which he was much beloved by them. Some, who wished no good, declared it was very true; and murmuring to each other as they were going to the fields, on the road from one village to another, or at their different houses, said, 'John Ball preaches such and such things, and he speaks truth.'

"The archbishop of Canterbury, on being informed of this, had John Ball arrested, and imprisoned for two or three months, by way of punishment; but it would have been better if he had been confined during his life, or had been put to death, than to have been suffered thus to act. The archbishop set him at liberty; for he could not for conscience sake have put him to death. The moment John Ball was out of prison, he returned to his former errors. Numbers in the city of London, having heard of his preaching, being envious of the rich men and nobility, had seized on all the gold and silver coin. These wicked Londoners therefore began to assemble and to rebel; they sent to tell

those in the adjoining counties, they might come boldly to London, and bring their companions with them; for they would find the town open to them, and the commonalty in the same way of thinking; that they would press the king so much, there should no longer be a slave in England.

"These promises stirred up those in the counties of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Bedford, and the adjoining country, so that they marched towards London; and, when they arrived near, they were upwards of sixty thousand. They had a leader called Wat Tyler, and with him were Jack Straw and John Ball. These three were their commanders, but the principal was Wat Tyler. This Wat Tyler had been a tiler of houses,—a bad man, and a great enemy to the nobility.

"When these wicked people began to rise, all London, except their friends, were very much frightened. The mayor and rich citizens assembled in council on hearing that they were coming to London, and debated whether they should shut the gates and refuse to admit them; but, having well considered, they determined not to do so, as they should run a risk of having their suburbs burnt.

"The gates were therefore thrown open, when they entered in troops of one or two hundred, by twenties or thirties, according to the populousness of the towns they came from; and, as they came into London, they lodged themselves. But it is a truth that full two-thirds of this people knew not

what they wanted, nor what they sought for; they followed one another like sheep, or like to the shepherds of old, who said they were going to conquer the Holy Land, and afterwards accomplished nothing. In such manner did these poor fellows and vassals come to London from distances of a hundred and sixty leagues, but the greater part from those counties I have mentioned; and, on their arrival, they demanded to see the king. The gentlemen of the country, the knights and squires, began to be alarmed when they saw the people thus rise; and, if they were frightened, they had sufficient reason, for less cause creates fear. They began to collect together as well as they could. The same day that these wicked men of Kent were on their road towards London, the princess of Wales, mother to the king, was returning from a pilgrimage to Canterbury. She ran great risks from them; for these scoundrels attacked her car, and caused much confusion, which greatly frightened the good lady, lest they should do some violence to her, or to her ladies. God, however, preserved her from this; and she came in one day from Canterbury to London, without venturing to make any stop by the way. Her son Richard was this day in the Tower of London: thither the princess came, and found the king, attended by the earl of Salisbury, the archbishop of Canterbury, Sir Robert de Namur, the Lord de Gommegines, and several more, who kept near his person from suspicions of his subjects, who were

thus assembling without knowing what they wanted. This rebellion was well known to be in agitation, in the king's palace, before it broke out and the country people had left their homes; to which the king applied no remedy, to the great astonishment of every one."*

The peasants of England had never forgotten their ancient Saxon rights: they had gradually reached that point in the progress of slaves towards their emancipation when their hopes are roused and their wrongs not yet redressed. Wicliffe's preaching had created a religious ferment, which predisposed the people to political change; his doctrines were adopted by many in the lower ranks of the secular clergy,—men who laboured earnestly in their vocation, and who retained their sympathies for the class from which they sprung, not only from their feelings of Christian obligation, but also because they felt themselves excluded from all hopes of promotion in the church. A glance at the lists of English bishops under the Plantagenets will suffice to show that the ecclesiastical dignities were almost exclusively conferred on men of Norman descent and on foreigners: this gave great and just offence to the Saxon population, especially as the foreign clergy were exceedingly harsh in their exactions. It is not generally known that the followers of Wicliffe, or the Lollards as they were called, anticipated George Fox in protesting against

* Froissart, Smith's edition, i. 654.

a paid ministry. We find Wicliffe, in his Apology for the Lollard doctrines, not only opposing episcopal jurisdiction and sacerdotal authority, but even objecting to any minister of religion receiving payment for the ordinary or extraordinary services of the church. "Priests celebrating public worship for money," says the great reformer, "sell Christ, and are worse than Judas in these five points: Judas sold him once, while mortified and not glorified, for thirty pence,—when he believed him not God, but a mortal man walking upon earth,—and afterwards he repented and brought back the pence; but they sell him immortal and glorified, and often for less price when they believe him God reigning eternally in heaven, and, until they come to repent, they restore not the money."* In another place we find him asserting the inutility, or at least denying the necessity, of ordination; for he declares, "There is no pope nor Christ's vicar, but an holy man."

Democratic doctrines cannot be preached in the church without soon extending their influence to the state. John Ball was most probably one of the

* This Apology was edited for the first time last year from a MS. in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, by the Rev. J. H. Todd, D.D.: the notes of the editor are replete with sound and recondite theological information; they have the rarer merit of discussing controversial topics with candour, moderation, and good-faith. Though we differ from Dr. Todd on many important points, we do so with the respect due to one who in all his writings combines the essential characteristics of a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian.

Lollards, for the germs of the doctrines which he preached are to be found in many of their writings. Even his celebrated text,

> "When Adam delved, and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman?"

is shadowed forth, not very indistinctly, in some of the tracts attributed to Wicliffe. Unfortunately, all the accounts we have of this insurgent priest were written by the enemies of the commons; and we are unable to discover whether he had any private wrongs to revenge, when he undertook to redress the grievances of his fellow-countrymen. It appears that he was a man of some literary ability; for one of the ancient chronicles mentions his skill in the court and classic languages, while Knyghton has preserved one of his circular letters, which is written in pure English, without any admixture of the Norman French. We quote in the original orthography, to show the state of the English language at the close of the fourteenth century, and also to preserve the rhyming prose, which is a characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon style: "John Ball gretith you well alle, and doth you understand he hath rungen your bell. Nowe ryght and myght, wylle and skylle, God spede every idele.* Stande manlyche togedir in trewth, and help you. If the ende be well, then all is well."†

* *Idele.*—Idle man, meaning the labourer who abandoned his work to join the insurgents.

† Knyghton, ii. 156.

Froissart, who ascribes this outbreak to "the too great comfort of the commonalty," may be received as a good evidence that the condition of the English peasant was superior to that of the French; but even in England the condition of the serf was one of hardship and bondage, especially during the minority of Richard II., when the turbulent nobles set all the restraints of law at defiance. About the time of the commencement of the insurrection, Sir Simon Burley, who was one of the guardians of the young king, and a man of great influence at court, went to Gravesend with an armed force, and claimed an industrious man, living in that town, as his escaped bondsman. A villain or serf, according to the law, acquired his freedom by living a year and a day in a town: but in this case Burley demanded the enormous sum of three hundred pounds of silver for the surrender of his claims to the man; and, when this was refused, he carried him off a prisoner to the castle of Rochester. This violence was aggravated by the locality of the occurrence; for it was the general belief that the Kentish men at the time of the Conquest had extorted from Norman William a grant of the Saxon charters and franchises contained in the laws of Edward the Confessor.*

* A popular ballad of the sixteenth century gives a very animated description of the means which the men of Kent employed to obtain a promise of their Saxon franchises from William the Conqueror. We quote a few stanzas.

At

The rapid loss of the conquests which Edward the Black Prince had won in France added to the popular discontent. Men soon become weary of an unsuccessful war, and severe taxation is a sharp stimulant to criticism on the extravagance or incapacity of government. The English regency did not abandon the war in France, but they conducted it most miserably and disgracefully. It was at the very moment when their unpopularity was at the highest, in consequence of their glaring misconduct, that they imposed a capitation tax on all

At Canterbury did they meet,
Upon a certain day,
With sword and spear, with bill and bow,
And stopt the Conqueror's way.

"Let us not yield, like bondmen poor,
To Frenchmen in their pride;
But keep our ancient liberty,
What chance so e'er betide."

* * * * *

Thus did the Kentish commons cry
Unto their leaders still,
And so march forth in warlike sort,
And stand at Swancourt hill.

* * * * *

And for the Conqueror's coming there
They privily did wait,
And thereby suddenly appall'd
His lofty high conceit.

For when they spied his approach,
In place as they did stand,
Then marched they to him with speed,
Each one a bough in hand.

So

grown persons within the kingdom. At first the tax was levied with mildness; but, being farmed out to some nobles, who raised money upon it from Flemish or Lombard merchants, it was exacted by their collectors with great strictness and severity, the more especially as it was soon discovered that the probable productiveness of the tax had been monstrously overrated. Some smart skirmishes between the collectors and the peasants took place in various parts of the kingdom, until at length an act of brutality on the part of a tax-gatherer

So that unto the Conqueror's sight,
Amazed as he stood,
They seem'd to be a walking grove,
Or else a moving wood.

The shape of man he could not see,
The boughs did hide them so;
And now his heart with fear did quake,
To see a forest go.

Before, behind, and on each side,
As he did cast his eye,
He spied the wood with sober pace
Approach to him full nigh.

But when the Kentish men had thus
Enclosed the Conqueror round,
Most suddenly they drew their swords,
And threw their boughs on ground.

* * * * *

Unto the Kentish men he sent,
The cause to understand,
For what intent and for what cause
They took this war in hand.

To

fanned the general discontent into a flame of insurrection.

Children were exempt from the tax by law; the peasants, therefore, had an interest in representing the age of their sons and daughters as less than it really was: disputes on the subject were continually occurring, and were decided by having recourse to acts of revolting indecency. One of the tax-gatherers in the town of Dartford went to the house of Walter the Tyler, and demanded poll-tax for his daughter: the mother maintained that the girl was but a child; the collector asserted that she

To whom they made this short reply,
"For liberty we fight,
And to enjoy king Edward's laws,
The which we hold our right."

Then said the dreadful Conqueror,
"Ye shall have what you will,
Your ancient customs and your laws,
So that you will be still:

"And each thing else that you will crave
With reason at my hand,
So you will but acknowledge me
The king of fair England."

The Kentish men agreed thereon,
And laid their arms aside;
And by this mean king Edward's laws
In Kent do still abide.

And in no place in England else
These customs do remain,
Which they by manly policy
Did of duke William gain.

was a woman, and attempted to prove it by an intolerable insult. The shrieks of the mother and daughter reached the ears of the Tyler, who was working on the roof of a neighbouring house. He hastened down to protect his family, and knocked out the collector's brains with his hammer. All his neighbours applauded the deed, and pledged themselves to support the just vengeance of the Tyler.

John, duke of Lancaster, the king's uncle, was believed to have had a principal share in imposing this obnoxious tax; he was also suspected of secretly plotting to usurp the crown of his nephew: hence, the insurgents were enabled in some degree to make loyalty a plea for their appearing in arms. They occupied all the roads, "killed all the judges and lawyers who fell into their hands, and compelled all the rest of the passengers to swear that they would be true to king Richard, and never submit to be ruled by a monarch named John." It is probable that many of the citizens of London sympathized with the insurgents; for three bodies of them, apparently without any previous concert, marched towards the metropolis. At the head of the revolters in the midland counties was Jack Straw, who is described as "a riotous priest." He was probably, like Ball, infected with the Lollard heresy, and opposed to the system of church government, which excluded those of his class and race from ecclesiastical dignities. Wat Tyler com-

manded the Kentish insurgents, and he is said to have had a hundred thousand men under his command when he reached Blackheath. Here the young king's mother* fell into the hands of the insurgents as she was returning from a pilgrimage to Canterbury. Notwithstanding their fury, the only inconvenience she suffered was being compelled to grant a few kisses "to some dirty-faced and rough-bearded men," who probably only designed to show in their rude way the affection which they bore to the memory of the popular hero, Edward the Black Prince. The king and most of his ministers, doubtful of the feelings of the Londoners, sought refuge in the Tower: some of the council

* This lady's history was very remarkable: she was the daughter of the earl of Kent, and had been betrothed when a child to Lord Holland; but the countess of Salisbury, anxious to secure such a wealthy heiress for her own family, took advantage of the earl's absence from England to contract a new match for her with the heir of the Montagues. When the young lady advanced to a marriageable age, however, she was claimed by the Lord Holland, and the dispute was brought before the court of Clement VI.

By this time her beauty had become the theme of fame and song throughout Europe; and the feeble constitution of her brother John rendered it not improbable that all the immense wealth, which had accumulated during the youth of two earls of Kent, would at length descend to her. Clement, after long investigation, decided in favour of Lord Holland. The second contract was annulled; and the Fair Maid of Kent, as she was generally called, was united to the person unto whom she had been first affianced. A very short time elapsed after this marriage ere the death of her brother without issue rendered her countess of Kent in her own right, and the decease of Lord Holland in the present

advised that the young monarch should go and speak with the insurgents, but the archbishop of Canterbury strenuously insisted that nothing but force should be used "to abate the pride of such vile rascals." Moderate counsels, however, prevailed; Richard went down the river in his barge to meet the insurgents, who were drawn up in thousands on the shore. "When they perceived his barge approach," says Froissart, "they set up such shouts and cries as if all the devils in hell had been in their company. They had their knight, Sir John Newtoun,* with them; for in case the king had not come, and they found he had made a jest of them, they would, as they had threatened, have cut him in pieces. When the king and his lords saw this crowd of people, and the wildness of their manner, there was not one among them so bold

year left her a beautiful widow, with the largest possessions held by any woman in the dominions of the king of England.

Her birth, her beauty, and her wealth caused the hand of the widowed countess of Kent to be an object of rivalry amongst all the greatest and noblest of the youth of England; and the influence of the Black Prince, her cousin, is said to have been exerted to forward the suit of one of his friends. The countess, however, was firm in her refusal; and we are told that it was in pleading the cause of his friend that Edward himself first learned to love. Nor was that love unhappy; for, whether the above anecdote be true or not,—and it is doubtful,—certain it is that on the 10th of October, 1361, he was united to the countess of Kent, after obtaining a special dispensation from the Pope to free them from the obstacle of their consanguinity.

* They had seized him, to compel him by force to become their commander, and had sent him as their ambassador to the king.

and determined but felt alarmed; the king was advised by his barons not to land, but to have his barge rowed up and down the river. 'What do ye wish for?' demanded the king; 'I am come hither to hear what ye have to say.' Those near him cried out with one voice, 'We wish thee to land, when we will remonstrate with thee, and tell thee more at our ease what our wants are.' The earl of Salisbury then replied for the king, and said, 'Gentlemen, you are not properly dressed, nor in a fit condition for the king to talk with you.' Nothing more was said; for the king was desired to return to the Tower of London, from whence he had set out."*

Lord Salisbury's ill-timed sarcasm, combined with the disappointment produced by the king's refusal to land, excited great indignation in the multitude. They exclaimed with one voice, "Let us immediately march to London!" They instantly set out; destroying the houses of all the lawyers and courtiers they passed upon the road, and plundering the monasteries. The extensive suburb of Southwark was seized by the multitude without resistance; they burned the prison of the Marshalsea, and the houses of some persons who were pointed out as peculiarly obnoxious. Many of the people of London favoured the insurgents, and were indignant because the mayor, Sir William Walworth, had closed the gates of the city, and secured London Bridge by a

* Froissart, i. 658.

strong garrison. They said, "Why will you refuse admittance to these honest men? they are our friends, and what they are doing is for our good." In consequence of these remonstrances, the gates were opened, when they rushed in, and were immediately joined by the work-people of the city. Their demeanour was at first tranquil: they did no hurt; they took nothing from any man, but bought all things they wanted at a just price. Unfortunately, the rich citizens, in order to conciliate the mob, had thrown open their cellars. The unusual luxury of wine soon infuriated the rude peasants. The first object of attack was the duke of Lancaster's palace of the Savoy, which was plundered and burned; the prisons were then forced open and destroyed. The criminals, thus set loose, joined the mob, and instigated them to further violence. The Temple, with all its valuable records, was burned; and the priory of St. John, belonging to the Knights Hospitallers, in Clerkenwell, shared the same fate. Some excuse may be found for the latter outrage in the fact, that the prior of the order, Sir Thomas Hales, held the office of treasurer of the kingdom, and was one of the chief agents in the oppression of the commons. They now also proceeded to the shedding of blood; they put the question to every man they met, "For whom holdest thou?" the answer to which should be, "For king Richard and the true commons!" and, whoever knew not that watchword, they cut off his head. "They murdered

a rich citizen, called Richard Lyon, to whom Wat Tyler had been formerly servant in France: but, having once beaten this varlet, he had not forgotten it; and, having carried his men to his house, ordered his head to be cut off, placed upon a pike, and carried through the streets of London." Their rage, however, was principally directed against the Flemings and Lombards, who were popularly said to have fattened on the miseries of the people: thirty of these foreigners, who had sought sanctuary, were dragged from the altars; and about as many more, who were seized in the Vintry, shared the same fate. For nearly an entire day and night, London was involved in fire, murder, and debauchery.

During the night, a council was held in the presence of the king: Froissart has preserved an account of its deliberations. "The barons who were in the Tower with the monarch, Sir William Walworth the mayor, and some of the principal citizens, proposed to arm themselves, and, during the night, fall upon these wretches—who were in the streets, and amounted to sixty thousand—while they were asleep and drunk; for that they might be killed like flies, and not one in twenty of them had arms. The citizens were very capable of doing this, for they had secretly received into their houses their friends and servants properly prepared to act. Sir Robert Knolles remained in his house, guarding his property with more than six score companions

completely armed, who would have instantly sallied forth; Sir Perdiccas d'Albreth was also in London at that period, and would have been of great service: so they could have mustered upwards of eight thousand men, well armed. But nothing was done, for they were too much afraid of the commonalty of London; and the advisers of the king, the earl of Salisbury and others, said to him, "Sir, if you can appease them by fair words, it will be so much the better, and good-humouredly grant them what they ask; for, should we begin what we cannot go through, we shall never be able to recover it: it will be all over with us and our heirs, and England will be a desert.' This council was followed, and the mayor ordered to make no movement. He obeyed, as in reason he ought." *

On the following morning a proclamation was issued to the insurgents, declaring, that if they would retire quietly to Mile-end, the king would meet them there, and grant all their requests. Before he proceeded to the interview, Richard sent away his half-brothers, the earl of Kent and Sir John Holland, with some other nobles, who were detested on account of their tyranny. Accompanied by a very moderate escort, the king rode into the midst of the insurgents, whose numbers exceeded sixty thousand men: he addressed them in a pleasant manner, saying, "My good people, I am your king and your

* Froissart, ut antè.

lord: what is it you want, and what do you wish to say to me? Their delegates then presented the four following demands; of which three, at-least, are perfectly just and reasonable.

First,—they required that they and their heirs, for ever, should be made free, and be no longer called slaves, nor held in bondage.

Second,—the reduction of good land to the rent of fourpence per acre.

Third,—the full liberty of buying and selling, like other men, in fairs and markets.

And, fourth,—a general amnesty and pardon for all past offences.

The second demand includes the absurdity of fixing a maximum rent on land; but the legislature in the preceding reign had set the peasants the example of attempting to fix a maximum rate of wages, and in modern times, notwithstanding the progress of economic science, we have seen the British parliament commit the parallel blunder of attempting to establish a minimum price of food. In the third demand, the peasants did not enunciate the great principle of common sense, that all men should be at liberty to sell in the dearest market, and buy in the cheapest; they rather sought to be delivered from a very vexatious incident to the feudal system,—the manorial rights over fairs and markets,—some of which are still maintained, and produce considerable inconvenience. The abolition of personal slavery was, however, the great object of the peasants;

and no one can doubt that they were justified in demanding this as a matter of right.

Richard assented to the demands of the peasants; thirty clerks were employed during the day to draw out charters of manumission, and these were so satisfactory to the people of the midland counties that most of them returned quietly to their own homes. But the Kentish men, and some others, were not so easily satisfied: scarcely had the king left the Tower to go to the meeting at Mile-end when they obtained admission into that fortress; probably by some act of treachery in the garrison, for there were six hundred men-at-arms and as many archers in the place, a force fully sufficient to repel a disorderly multitude destitute both of guidance and of weapons. No sooner had the rioters obtained an entrance than they seized and beheaded the archbishop of Canterbury, who was lord chancellor: Sir Robert Hales, the treasurer; William Apuldore, the king's confessor; "and likewise a Franciscan friar, a doctor of physic, who was attached to the duke of Lancaster, out of spite to his master; and also a serjeant-at-arms, of the name of John Legge."* The princess-dowager of Wales again fell into their hands, but was treated with proper respect: the scenes she witnessed, however, "terrified her so much that she fainted; and in this condition was, by her servants and ladies, carried to the river-side, where she was put into a

* Froissart, ut antè.

covered boat, and conveyed to the house called the Wardrobe,* where she continued that day and night like a woman half-dead, until she was comforted by the king her son."

Froissart informs us that the peasantry of Norfolk rivalled those of Kent in violence. We give his narrative in his own graphic words:

"I must now relate an adventure which happened to these clowns before Norwich, and to their leader, called William Lister, who was from the county of Stafford. On the same day these wicked people burnt the palace of the Savoy, the church and house of St. John, the hospital of the Templars, pulled down the prison of Newgate, and set at liberty all the prisoners, there were collected numerous bodies from Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk, who proceeded on their march towards London, according to the orders they had received, under the direction of Lister.

"In their road, they stopped near Norwich, and forced every one to join them, so that none of the commonalty remained behind. The reason why they stopped near Norwich was, that the governor of the town was a knight, called Sir Robert Salle: he was not by birth a gentleman, but, having acquired great renown for his ability and courage, king Edward had created him a knight: he was the handsomest and strongest man in England. Lister and his companions took it into their heads they

* The king's Wardrobe was at this time in Carter Lane, Barnard's-castle ward.

would make this knight their commander, and carry him with them, in order to be the more feared. They sent orders to him to come out into the fields to speak with them, or they would attack and burn the city.

"The knight, considering it was much better for him to go to them than that they should commit such outrages, mounted his horse, and went out of the town alone to hear what they had to say. When they perceived him coming, they showed him every mark of respect, and courteously entreated him to dismount and talk with them. He did dismount, and committed a great folly; for, when he had so done, having surrounded him, they at first conversed in a friendly way, saying, 'Robert, you are a knight, and a man of great weight in this country, renowned for your valour, yet, notwithstanding all this, we know who you are; you are not a gentleman, but the son of a poor mason, just such as ourselves. Do you come with us as our commander, and we will make so great a lord of you that one quarter of England shall be under your command.'

"The knight, on hearing them thus speak, was exceedingly angry: he would never have consented to such a proposal; and, eyeing them with inflamed looks, answered, 'Begone, wicked scoundrels and false traitors, as you are! would you have me desert my natural lord for such a company of knaves as you? would you have me dishonour myself? I

would much rather you were all hanged, for that must be your end.'

"On saying this, he attempted to mount his horse; but, his foot slipping from the stirrup, his horse took fright. They then shouted out and cried, 'Put him to death!' When he heard this, he let his horse go, and, drawing a handsome Bordeaux sword, he began to skirmish, and soon cleared the crowd from before him, that it was a pleasure to see. Some attempted to close with him; but, with each stroke he gave, he cut off heads, arms, legs, or feet. There were none so bold but were afraid; and Sir Robert performed that day marvellous feats of arms.

"These wretches were upwards of forty thousand. They shot and flung at him such things, that, had he been clothed in steel, instead of being unarmed, he must have been overpowered: however, he killed twelve of them, besides many whom he wounded. At last he was overthrown; when they cut off his legs and arms, and rent his body in piecemeal.

"Thus ended Sir Robert Salle, which was a great pity; and, when the knights and squires in England heard of it, they were much enraged."

According to Knyghton, Wat Tyler kept the men of Kent together for the purpose of obtaining the repeal of the forest or game laws, which, ever since the Conquest, had been most odious to the English peasantry: he insisted that all warrens, waters, parks, and woods should be common, so

that the poor as well as the rich might freely fish in all waters, hunt the deer in forests and parks, and the hare in the field. As this concession was not made, he contemptuously rejected the charters granted at Mile-end.

On the day following the interview at Mile-end, Richard, having performed his devotions in the church of "Our Lady," proceeded with an escort of knights and barons along "the causeway" towards London. He passed through the pretty village of Charing, but, instead of turning down the Strand, he rode over Holborn-hill, and turned into West Smithfield, where the insurgents were assembled. Just as the king came opposite the abbey of St. Bartholomew, he was recognized by Wat Tyler, who said to his followers, "Here is the king; I will go speak with him. Move not hand or foot until I give you a signal." Wat then rode forward, the king having halted to afford him an opportunity of parley. Various reports are given of this interview by different historians, but all agree that the bearing of Wat Tyler was very bold and offensive: he menaced the king with the wrath of the multitude, and compelled one of the royal attendants, with whom he seems to have had a previous quarrel, to surrender his weapons. In the midst of a sharp discussion, Sir William Walworth, the lord-mayor, rode up: it is doubtful whether he was irritated by Wat Tyler's offensive demeanour, or whether he believed that the insurgent chief me-

ditated violence against the king; certain it is that he struck Wat a blow of his sword, which felled him from his horse, and Ralph Standish, one of the king's esquires, completed the murder as the Tyler lay on the ground. This rashness might have proved fatal to the royal party but for the presence of mind displayed by the young monarch, then only in his fifteenth year: perceiving the insurgents beginning to bend their bows, and make other preparations for revenging the death of their leader, he rode up to them, and exclaimed, "What are ye doing, my lieges? Tyler was a traitor; I am your king, and I will be your captain and guide." He then returned to his lords, and by their advice rode slowly towards the open fields about Islington, followed only by a portion of the insurgents; for the rest, dispirited by the loss of their leader, slipped away to their several homes.

In the mean time, a cry had been raised in the city that the insurgents were killing the king: several of the citizens flew to arms, the lord-mayor collected all the soldiers employed in garrisoning the civic castles, the noblemen brought forward their retainers, and by these means Sir Robert Knolles was able to collect some thousands of men-at-arms, with whom he joined the king in Islington fields. At the sight of the soldiers, the insurgents lost all their courage; they threw down their bows and other weapons, falling upon their knees to supplicate mercy. Sir Robert Knolles was anxious to

charge the helpless multitude, and massacre them in a heap; but the king would not consent, declaring, as the chroniclers relate, "that he would have his full revenge in another way."

We are slow to believe what all historians have recorded, and for the most part with praise, that Richard's assent to the just demands of the peasants was insincere from the beginning: if it be true that "nature had never intended him for anything better than a good-humoured fool," he was still too young for any system of education to have rendered him "a consummate hypocrite." For the honour of humanity, we may suppose that the young king felt some sympathy for the unmerited sufferings of his subjects, but that he had not firmness to resist the persuasions of those who surrounded him, all of whom were more or less personally interested in maintaining the oppressions of the peasantry. His mildness in permitting the insurgents to disperse, was not imitated in other parts of the kingdom. The armed retainers of the nobles cut to pieces every band of peasants which they intercepted, but no one proved more formidable in this service than Hugh Spencer, bishop of Norwich: he took the field in complete armour, supported by a numerous army, surprised several bodies of insurgents, slew a great number, and made many more prisoners. His mode of treating the prisoners was a little original: he had them brought before him; putting off his armour, he resigned the character of soldier for that

of judge, and granted them a summary trial; then, taking up the crucifix, he appeared as their ghostly adviser, for he heard their confessions and granted them absolution; after which the poor wretches were sent straight to the block or the gibbet.

After the suppression of the insurrection, king Richard found himself at the head of forty thousand men, composed of the landed aristocracy of England. Thus supported, he revoked all the charters of emancipation which he had granted, and issued a proclamation, commanding all tenants in villainage to perform their feudal services to their lords as usual. The men of Essex, who had been the least violent during the insurrection, made some resistance; but they were easily defeated, and the servile war was at an end. Special commissions were issued for the trial of the rioters. Jack Straw and John Ball, notwithstanding their sacerdotal character, underwent the barbarous penalties of high treason: Lister and Westbroom, who had taken the titles of kings of the commons in Norfolk and Suffolk, shared the same, and were not much pitied. But, to the shame of a Christian land, it must be recorded, that the special commissions were executed with so much severity, especially by Sir Robert Tressilian, lord chief-justice of the king's bench, that fifteen hundred unhappy wretches were condemned and executed as traitors. The bodies were left exposed on gibbets to excite horror and terror; but, as they were cut down by their friends, the king order-

ed that they should be fastened to the gibbets, and this is believed to be the first introduction of this disgusting practice into England.

When parliament assembled, the revocation of the charters of emancipation was solemnly ratified: to such an extent, indeed, did the landed aristocracy carry their determination to maintain feudal slavery, that they declared "they would not consent to the enfranchisement of their serfs, even to save themselves from perishing altogether in one day." They passed a law by which "riots, rumours, and other such things" were declared to be high treason; a statute which could only be rivalled by the oath with an *et cætera* in the middle of it, imposed by the university of Oxford. Finally, they proposed an act of indemnity for all the illegal acts committed by themselves in putting down the insurgents; but Richard, in this instance, had them at advantage, and would not ratify the pardon until they had gratified him with a subsidy.

Richard found, too late, that his unjust and treacherous conduct towards the bulk of his subjects had only served to render him the slave of the aristocracy, as well as themselves. The people saw him, without pity, forced to yield up his royal authority to successive juntas of nobles, and to consent to the execution of his friends and favourites. There was no popular movement in his defence when he was deposed by Henry Bolingbroke; and Shakspeare has only given a poetic form to the proofs,

which all contemporaries have supplied, of the patience, or rather the pleasure, with which his humiliation was witnessed by the citizens of London when he was led through the streets of this capital to grace the triumph of his haughty cousin.

> As in a theatre the eyes of men,
> After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage,
> Are idly bent on him that enters next,
> Thinking his prattle to be tedious;
> Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
> Did scowl on Richard: no man cried God save him!
> No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home;
> But dust was thrown upon his sacred head;
> Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,
> His face still combating with tears and smiles,—
> The badges of his grief and patience,—
> That, had not God for some strong purpose steel'd
> The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
> And barbarism itself have pitied him.
> But Heaven hath a hand in these events,
> To whose high will we bound our calm contents.*

Though the insurrection of Wat Tyler was suppressed, villainage received a blow from which it never recovered. It was seventy years before the commons rose again, under the command of Jack Cade; and the difference between the demands of the insurgents on these two occasions affords strong proof of the progress which the labouring classes had achieved in the intervening period. In Wat Tyler's insurrection of 1380, the principal demand was the abolition of villainage,

* King Richard II., Act v. Scene ii.

or prædial slavery; but, in 1450, not a word was said about villainage: that abuse had been almost, if not altogether, swept away; the commons had risen to such influence in the state as to demand a redress of public grievances, and even some concessions of political power. They insisted that the treasures of the crown should not be wasted; that the property of the subject should not be illegally seized; that foreigners should be excluded from the administration; and they complained loudly of the extortions of the sheriffs and tax-gatherers,—of delays and other abuses in the administration of justice. But their most remarkable complaint, and that which most satisfactorily proves the great advance made since the days of Wat Tyler, was their remonstrance against the interference of the nobility in elections of knights of the shire, and the demand that the free choice of their representatives in parliament should be left where the law had placed it—in the hands of the people.

The popular hatred of De la Pole, duke of Suffolk, the favourite of Henry VI., or rather of Queen Margaret, had provoked several outbreaks of popular indignation, particularly in Kent, where the peasants had ever shown the firmest resolution to assert their freedom. At first, the insurgents took the name of *Bluebeards*, but seem to have had no settled plan of insurrection. The Bluebeard of Kent, in fact, appears to have been

just as uncertain and ubiquitous a person as the Captain Rock, or the Captain Swing, of our own times. Early in the year 1450, Suffolk, who had been impeached three years before, was banished by the king; but this was believed to be a mere juggle for the purpose of saving the duke from the sentence of parliament. It was said that "the duke of Suffolk was right well at ease, and merry and in the king's grace, and in the good conceit of the lords as well as ever." The ship in which he was proceeding to France was intercepted on the coast by one of superior force, described by some authorities as one of the royal navy, by others as a pirate. Suffolk was brought before the captain of the cruiser, and, after a very brief colloquy, ordered to be immediately executed. The sentence was carried into effect by one of the sailors with a rusty sword; he performed his task so awkwardly, that it took half-a-dozen strokes to separate the head from the body. Suffolk's chief offence was his share in the murder of the duke of Gloucester, the most popular prince of the house of Lancaster; but he was also accused of improper familiarity with the queen, and of several other crimes which are thus enumerated by Shakspeare in the reproachful speech which he represents the captain of the cruiser as addressing to the captive duke:

> Now will I dam up this thy yawning mouth,
> For swallowing the treasure of the realm:
> Thy lips, that kissed the queen, shall sweep the ground;

And thou, that smil'dst at good duke Humphrey's death,
Against the senseless wind shall grin in vain,
Who in contempt shall kiss at thee again:
And wedded be thou to the hags of hell,
For daring to affy a mighty lord
Unto the daughter of a worthless king,
Having neither subject, wealth, or diadem.
By devilish policy art thou grown great,
And like ambitious Sylla overgorged
With gobbets of thy mother's bleeding heart;
By thee Anjou and Maine were sold to France;
The false revolting Normans, through thee,
Disdain to call us lord; and Picardy
Hath slain their governors, surprised our forts,
And sent the ragged soldiers wounded home;
The princely Warwick, and the Nevils all,—
Whose dreadful swords were never drawn in vain,—
As hating thee, are rising up in arms:
And now the house of York—thrust from the crown
By shameful murder of a guiltless king,
And lofty proud encroaching tyranny,—
Burns with revenging fire, whose hopeful colours
Advance our half-faced sun striving to shine,
Under the which is wit—*Invitis nubibus.*
The commons here in Kent are up in arms.
And, to conclude, reproach and beggary
Are crept into the palace of our king,
And all by thee.

The poet has followed a tradition, which we believe to be authentic, in connecting the murder of Suffolk with the disturbances in Kent; but it is not easy to discover how the commons were able to influence the conduct of the captain of the cruiser, especially if his ship belonged to the royal navy. It is also a matter of doubt whether queen

Margaret felt, or expressed, any resentment for the destruction of her favourite; but it appears pretty certain that dread of her vengeance led the peasants to engage in a general revolt. A man named John Cade appeared as their leader; his real character is involved in much mystery: according to a contemporary authority, his real name was John Aylmere, and he had been originally a physician; others assert that he was an Irish outlaw who had been in the service of the duke of York; they add, that the duke employed him to sound the dispositions of the people, for the purpose of discovering how far they would be inclined to support the pretensions of his family to the crown. It is a further disputed point whether Cade himself took the name of Mortimer, or whether it was bestowed upon him by his followers, with manifest allusion to the claims of the Mortimers to the crown; which claims, however, were now indisputably vested in Richard duke of York.

About the middle of June, Cade formed an encampment on Blackheath, where he could easily communicate with the malcontents of London: twenty thousand men are said to have flocked to his standard, and in their name he issued a manifesto, entitled "The Complaint of the Commons of Kent," the substance of which has been already stated. Some delay was required by the court to consider the petition; but the interval was spent in preparing an army, part of which was sent

against the insurgents, under the command of Sir Humphrey Stafford. On the approach of the king's army Cade retired from Blackheath to a stronger position at Sevenoaks, and there awaited an attack. Stafford was defeated with great loss; and the rest of the royal forces declared that they would not fight against their own countrymen, who only called for a reasonable redress of grievances, and who had taken the field for their rights and the liberties of the nation. The army was consequently disbanded, and the king fled from London to seek shelter in the strong castle of Kenilworth. Lord Say, the most unpopular of the ministry, was sent to the Tower, which Lord Scales promised to defend; and it was hoped that this concession would satisfy the discontented in London.

Immediately after his victory at Sevenoaks, Cade returned to Blackheath, and soon took possession of the entire right bank of the Thames from Lambeth to Greenwich. He now assumed the attire, ornaments, and style of a knight, and under the title of captain enforced the strictest discipline among his followers. The duke of Buckingham and the archbishop of Canterbury, who had been sent to negociate with him, acknowledged that they found him "right discrete in his answers; howbeit, they could not cause him to lay down his people, and to submit him unto the king's grace."

A demand for admission into the city was conceded by the mayor and aldermen: Cade made a

triumphant entry in the shining armour and gilt spurs of a knight; but, anxious to preserve discipline, he issued orders, forbidding his followers to plunder under severe penalties. He rode in exultation through several streets; and, when he passed by London stone, he is said to have struck it with his sword, exclaiming, "Now is Mortimer lord of the city!" The same good order was observed when he visited the city a second day; but he induced the governor of the Tower to surrender Lord Say, and compelled the mayor and aldermen to sit in judgment on the unfortunate nobleman. Lord Say vainly claimed the privilege of being tried by his peers; he was hurried away to the Standard in Cheapside, and there beheaded. His son-in-law, Cromer, sheriff of Kent, met the same fate a short time after. On the third or fourth day some houses were pillaged by the insurgents; upon which the citizens of London barricaded the bridge, and obtained a detachment of the garrison from the Tower to assist in its defence. When Cade attempted a passage on the following morning, he encountered a fierce resistance; and, notwithstanding the utmost exertions of his followers, met with a severe repulse. This greatly disheartened the rioters, many of whom had begun to grow weary of Cade's inordinate vanity and absurd pretensions; in spite of his edicts against desertion, several stole away to their own homes.

Intelligence of the decline of the insurrection

was soon conveyed to the archbishops of York and Canterbury, and to the rest of the king's ministers, who had found shelter in the Tower. They sent the bishop of Winchester to the insurgents with the promise of a general amnesty, and a vague declaration of an intention to redress all proved grievances. Some were dissatisfied with this indefinite promise, but far the greater number declared that they had obtained what they desired. The feuds of the insurgents terrified their leader: Cade, fearing that he would either be murdered or delivered up to the government, which had declared him traitor, and fixed a price on his head, secretly fled on horseback, and attempted to escape towards the coast of Sussex. He was closely pursued, and overtaken by Alexander Iden, or Eden, a gentleman of Kent: the outlaw made a brave resistance, but was at length slain. Eden brought Cade's head to London, where it was exposed on the bridge; and the other leaders of the insurrection were taken and executed as traitors.

This strange insurrection was a prelude to the sanguinary wars of the Roses, in which so many of the old Norman families were utterly destroyed that English feudalism may be said to have perished from the want of materials to support its structure. The new nobility created by the Tudors and the Stuarts had not the power, even if they possessed the inclination, to restore the yoke which had crumbled to pieces in the hands of their prede-

cessors; a middle class of country-gentlemen began to be formed, who could not struggle for their own emancipation from feudal incidents without in some degree supporting the cause of the inferior tenants; and, since the overthrow of the Norman barons, by mutual slaughter in the numerous battles between the houses of York and Lancaster, the middle classes in England have grown into such strength, that, whenever it has pleased them to act as a class or order, they have been more than a match for the titled aristocracy. In the contests which have arisen, both parties have been compelled to conciliate the operative and labouring classes by repeated recognition of their rights; so that the strife against feudalism, which was not decided in France till the close of the eighteenth century, may be said to have been settled in England before the close of the fifteenth: and, if it be true that the French peasants have more completely destroyed the bonds of feudalism than those of England, (a matter of which we may be permitted to say that we entertain very considerable doubts,) it must not be forgotten that the exemption, such as it is, was purchased by three hundred years of aggravated suffering.

CHAPTER V.

Insurrections of the Middle Classes against Feudalism.—The Influence of Commerce and Manufactures in the Netherlands: Revolts of the Flemings against their Rulers.

THE Flemings were the first people in the north of Europe that successfully cultivated arts and manufactures: their industry supplied the principal markets of Europe with cloth in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; while, through the commercial cities of Italy, they were enabled to send the products of their industry to the ports of the Levant, and exchange them for spices, jewels, and other articles of Oriental luxury. In consequence of the industry of his subjects, the earl of Flanders was more wealthy, and scarcely less powerful, than his *suzerain*, the king of France; and was in all but name an independent monarch. When Edward I. of England wished to recover Guienne, which had been wrested from his predecessors, he sought the alliance of Guy de Dampierre, earl of Flanders, and proposed to make the earl's daughter, Philippa, his queen; being attracted both by her personal charms and the enormous sums promised as her dowry.

The treaties of marriage and alliance were concluded at Liege in 1294, the bishop of Lincoln and the earl de Warrenne acting as plenipotentiaries on the part of England. Philip the Fair, of France, was alarmed at the intelligence of the proposed alliance. As he was the godfather of the young lady, he invited her and the earl to pay him a visit in Paris; but no sooner did they reach the capital than he threw both into prison, declaring that the marriage of so wealthy an heiress could not be arranged without the consent of the superior lord, and that the earl was guilty of felony in promising the hand of his daughter to an enemy of the kingdom. After a captivity of some months, the earl of Flanders succeeded in making his escape; but the detention of his daughter, to whom he was fondly attached, prevented him from taking any active measures against Philip, and for a few years tranquillity was preserved.

Philippa, after her father's escape, was taken from her prison to the palace, where she was educated as one of the royal family. Her death, which was sudden, gave rise to a report that she had been poisoned: the earl, believing or feigning to believe the charge, assembled his chief vassals at Grammont; and there, in the presence of the ambassadors from England, Germany, and Lorraine, he solemnly renounced his allegiance to the crown of France, and proclaimed war against Philip. Several other of the great lords entered into the alliance to overthrow the growing power of the French king; and, had they all

fulfilled their engagements, the monarchy would in all probability have been dismembered. But, while Edward lavishly distributed bribes and subsidies on all sides, Philip contrived, with far less expense, to counteract all his exertions. He resolved to anticipate his enemies, and invade Flanders, where a large and influential body was ready to declare in his favour.*

Commerce and manufactures had brought together a large and wealthy population into the cities of Flanders; the burgesses had purchased charters of privileges from their respective lords, being well aware that municipal freedom was necessary to commercial prosperity; they began to rival their former masters in wealth and influence, and they formed an order of their own, which was as much respected in the trading communities as the landed aristocracy in the rural districts. On the other hand, the nobles soon regretted that they had granted charters which prevented them from seizing at their discretion the wealth of their former subjects: with that singular infatuation which has been the curse of oligarchies in all ages, they were anxious to realize the fable of the boy and the goose that laid golden eggs; they were eager to crush commerce by taxation, and thus sacrifice their great annual profits for one great but temporary scene of confiscations.

The history of the early wars in Flanders is inter-

* Oudegherst, Annales de Flandres, c. 130—133.

esting to all who desire to understand the character of the middle ages; but it is still more important to a commercial nation, as it exhibits the most memorable struggle which ever took place in modern Europe. We find, in the chronicles,* that the dislike with which the nobles viewed the progress of the merchants rested both on positive and comparative grounds. Not only were the lords grieved at the loss of their power to extort discretionary imposts, but they regretted the growth of that mercantile wealth which invested counting-houses and stores with a political influence not inferior to that which had hitherto attached exclusively to castles and estates. The wealthy Flemings did not make any effort to assimilate themselves to the nobles; they formed an aristocracy of their own; "they stood by their order," and devised titles, ranks, and dignities in their several classes and municipalities, which they valued not less highly than the nobles did their heraldic honours. In all manufacturing communities where a demand is raised for trained and skilled labour, there must necessarily be some demand for labour requiring nothing more than the exertion of brute strength. In the competition,

* Oudegherst is the principal authority for the early history of Flanders; Sismondi has, however, supplied many of his deficiencies from the chronicles of France. We have verified a vast number of Sismondi's references without detecting a single inaccuracy, and therefore have felt confidence in adopting his statements, where there was not an opportunity for investigating all his authorities.

also, for those industrial employments which require skill and training, many candidates, attracted by the high rates of wages, will necessarily offer themselves, destitute of the intelligence, the disciplined mind, and the industry necessary to ensure success. Such men are predestined to fail in the course on which they have entered, and seem equally predestined never to discover the true causes of their failure. They impute the blame to the disproportion between the profits of capital and industry,—never suspecting that capital is realized industry; to some incomprehensible juggle between employers to keep down the rate of wages, over the fluctuations of which masters have no more control than over the ebb and flow of the tides; to what they are taught to regard as an unfair distribution of wealth; in short, to anything rather than themselves. By appealing to the passions and prejudices of men of this kind, who must always abound in every large city, the nobles of Flanders succeeded, to a considerable extent, in alienating the lower from the middle classes, and securing to themselves an anti-mercantile party in every large town. It seems strange that the nobles did not perceive that the claims of operatives to share in the profits of capital are, in principle, the same as the demands of the agrarian labourers for an equal distribution of land, except that they are more obviously unjust; inasmuch as landed property is the creature of conventional law, while capital can only be created by

industry and intelligence. Had they succeeded in effecting a commercial revolution for the imaginary advantage of the operatives, nothing under heaven could have saved them from an agrarian revolution for the substantial profit of their own tenants.

Guy de Dampierre, earl of Flanders, had, from the very beginning of his reign, applied all his energies to extending feudal privileges and crippling mercantile freedom; never hesitating to violate the municipal charters which had been granted by his ancestors. He had particularly assailed the magistracy of Ghent, commonly called the Thirty-nine, and had treated them so unjustly that they had been forced to appeal to the king of France as their lord paramount. Philip the Fair received their complaint with great eagerness: though a bitter enemy to civic franchises in his own dominions, he declared himself the protector of the municipalities of Belgium; and, when earl Guy expelled the Thirty-nine from Ghent, they found shelter in Philip's dominions, while their fellow-citizens, who groaned under the new despotic administration established by the earl, were ready to join the French king as the patron of freedom and law. Bruges, and the other great towns, were equally alienated from the earl, who had, in fact, no adherents but the rural aristocracy and the lowest classes in the towns.

When the French army approached his frontiers, earl Guy made an effort to conciliate the subjects

whom he had alienated; he solemnly renewed the charters which he had previously endeavoured to annul, and made many wise regulations respecting the administration of justice and the management of the currency.* But these concessions came too late; the people had pronounced sentence upon the government, and would not receive as favours what had been extorted by fear. The mercantile classes refused their aid: a Flemish army, composed of the best knights of Flanders, and the worst infantry that had probably been seen in that age, was routed by the French near Furnes, and the principal cities of the Western Netherlands opened their gates to Philip.

Earl Guy had relied on assistance from Edward I., king of England; but that monarch's wars in Wales, Scotland, and Guienne had led to such oppressive taxes that all classes of his subjects were averse to his interference in the contests of Flanders. In a desperate effort to raise money by any means, legal or illegal, he had seized on all the wool and hides which were ready for shipping, and had sold them for his own profit; this was an attack, not only upon the merchants, but also upon the great landholders, most of whose income at that period was derived from the export of the wool grown upon their estates: the nobles

* Debasing the coin was a favourite measure of finance with the feudal sovereigns, as it still is with the equally barbarous despots of the East.

and the trading-classes consulted together, and soon organized their plans for constitutional resistance. In the spring of the year 1297, when Edward had collected two armies, one for Guienne and the other for Flanders, the two greatest nobles of the land, the earl of Hereford, the lord high-constable, and the earl of Norfolk, earl-marshal of the kingdom, positively refused to embark. Edward, in fury, declared to the earl-marshal, "By the everlasting God, sir earl, you shall either go or hang!" Norfolk, who knew that he would be well supported, boldly replied, "By the everlasting God, sir king, I will neither go nor hang!" He withdrew from the camp, accompanied by the earl of Hereford. No less than thirty bannerets and fifteen hundred knights followed the example of the constable and marshal: Edward was left almost alone.

In this difficulty the monarch had recourse to a measure which may be characterized as belonging to that narrow and debatable ground which separates the sublime from the ridiculous. He had a platform erected in front of Westminster Hall, and summoned both his barons and the citizens of London to an extraordinary convocation. He then appeared on the scaffold, accompanied only by his son Edward, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the earl of Warwick. With tears in his eyes, he confessed that his government had not been so tranquil or pacific as it ought to have been; he threw upon his ministers the chief blame of the illegal exactions

which had provoked popular discontent; and he declared that his present request of means for carrying on war arose, not from any lust of conquest, but from the sheer necessity of preserving the realm from the Welch, the Scotch, but more especially from the French, who were athirst for English blood. Then, bursting into tears, he continued, "I am going to expose myself to all the dangers of war for your sake. If I return alive, I will make you amends for the past: but, if I fall, here is my dear son; place him on my throne, and his gratitude will well reward your fidelity."*

A descent of the French at Dover some time before, in which many acts of wanton and savage cruelty had been committed, in some degree prepared the people for responding to this appeal; indeed, for a long course of centuries, a war against the French, who were studiously represented as our natural enemies, would have required a far less dramatic display to render it popular in England. Still, the discontented were not wholly appeased; and, when Edward finally embarked at Winchelsea in the month of August, the troops by which he was accompanied did not amount to near the number of those that the earl of Flanders had already lost in the war.

Fresh mortifications awaited the English monarch

* Matthew of Westminster, sub ann. 1297.—The worthy old chronicler seems to have regarded this strange proceeding as no better than, what it really was, a solemn farce.

on his landing: the king of the Romans did not appear with his promised contingent, being too deeply engaged in the wars of Germany; the duke of Brittany was marching under the banners of the king of France; the Gascons had not made their promised diversion in the west; and the nobles on the eastern side of France pocketed the English subsidy and remained quiet. When the English reached Bruges, they found the citizens completely alienated from their lord, on account of his violation of their municipal rights: Edward and his ally were aware of the danger of waiting for the advance of the French in a disaffected city; they retired to Ghent, while the gates of Bruges were opened to Philip, who was received, not as a conqueror, but as a deliverer. In Ghent a deadly feud broke out between the citizens and the English soldiers; the entire winter was spent in their mutual contests; so that at the beginning of the ensuing spring Guy and Edward were equally convinced of the impolicy of further hostilities, and an armistice of two years was concluded with the French. Thus Philip, a king destitute of military reputation, unsupported by public opinion, surrounded by vassals whom he had offended, and served by people whom he had oppressed, prevailed over the most experienced and famous warrior of the age, simply by declaring himself the protector of the mercantile and municipal interests of the Flemings. At the termination of the armi-

stice, the earl Guy was left without an ally. Charles of Valois, Philip's brother, invaded his dominions; city after city opened its gates to the French; the unfortunate earl was at length induced to entrust himself to Charles by delusive promises; he was sent a prisoner to Paris, and all his territories were annexed to the domain of the crown.

In the spring of the year 1300 Philip visited the towns of Flanders, having previously spread abroad his intention to extend their civic and trading privileges. His reception was enthusiastic: the cities of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres received him with the most extravagant honours; the several incorporated trades and companies displayed their wealth before him in magnificent processions; they even prepared for him the aristocratic games of chivalry, proclaiming justs and tournaments, though they were aware that they would themselves be excluded from the lists. Crowds of knights from England, France, and Germany came to witness and profit by the ostentation of the Flemings. But it is a fatal error for a mercantile aristocracy to become the imitators of the landed aristocracy; the wealth which they displayed excited the cupidity of the king of France and his needy courtiers: they had to undergo a new series of suffering from vexatious talliages, imposts, and tolls; their complaints were derided by the nobles and disregarded by the king, who were, indeed, all more annoyed than gratified by finding citizens

display greater magnificence than could be exhibited in castles or even in palaces. The warning was not lost on the Flemings; the merchants took care to avoid both connection and competition with aristocratic fashions for the future.

Some of the more wealthy burgesses in the Flemish towns were, however, seduced by the honours of the court, and by the influence of fashion, to desert the cause of their order: a complaint of distress was never made from a manufacturing town without some of the manufacturers, who deemed it an honour to belong to the same political party as their oppressors, coming forward to declare that the statements were exaggerated, and the grievances imaginary. Jacques de Châtillon, the governor of Flanders, artfully flattered the vanity of this party, and persuaded them that it was glorious to be slaves themselves, provided that they were allowed to tyrannize over their fellow-citizens in turn. Relying on their support, Châtillon arrested thirty masters of trading companies, who had been delegated by their respective corporations to complain of payment being withheld for the various articles they had supplied to the government. Amongst these captives was Peter König,* consul of the weavers, and John Bride, consul of the butchers, whose real influence in the city was far greater than the

* König—that is, King—appears to have been his nickname rather than his surname, but the two are frequently confounded in the old chronicles.

titles of their offices would appear to denote. König was a man about sixty years of age, deprived of one eye, small and meagre, possessing but a moderate share of fortune. He was uneducated, for he was ignorant both of French and Latin; but the vivid eloquence with which he spoke in his native Flemish, the acuteness of his observations, and the intrepidity of his character, had secured him a high place in the estimation of his fellow-citizens.

When the civic companies heard of these arrests, they flew to arms, forced the gates of the prison, liberated their companions, and maltreated several of the municipal authorities who had sided with the governor. Châtillon artfully represented the quarrel as an attempt of the trading companies to set aside certain aristocratic privileges which had been conceded to the members of the superior municipality, and proposed that, as a question of law, the matter should be referred to the parliament of Paris. A year elapsed before the sentence was pronounced; and then the verdict was given in favour of the governor and the superior councillors. The trading corporations were amerced in heavy damages, and their consuls commanded to be again thrown into prison. Preparations for resistance were made by the artisans; but, as they were afraid at first to measure their strength against the French garrison in Bruges, they marched out of the city and took possession of the little town of

Dammes. From thence they made excursions to the different towns and castles within the liberties of Bruges, a district so called because it shared in the franchises of the city: their successes were not bloodless; they slew the governors of the different posts, and every Frenchman who fell into their hands. On receiving intelligence of these disturbances, Châtillon hastened to reinforce the garrison of Bruges with fifteen hundred knights, whose services were expected to be most efficient, as the fortifications of the city had been destroyed by king Philip. König and Bride, the chiefs of the revolters, introduced their troops into the city by night, and effected a junction with the incorporated companies, who had secretly taken up arms. Chains were drawn in silence across the principal streets, and barricades hastily erected; the saddles and bridles of the French cavalry were destroyed or concealed by the citizens in whose houses they were quartered. When all preparations were complete, a little after midnight the tocsin was sounded from the bells of all the churches; and the various companies raised their war-cry on every side, "Long live our franchises! Death to the French!" Roused from their sleep, unable to discover any rallying point, the unfortunate French were cut down in the streets and houses almost without resistance: a few horsemen got together, and attempted to charge the insurgents; their steeds were tripped by the chains which were drawn across the

streets; horseman and horse came down together on the pavement, where they were crushed by missiles from the houses, or pierced by darts and arrows from the corners of the narrow lanes. In this night of terror the women were more formidable than the men; they attacked the knights in their beds, and either slew them with daggers, or threw them out of the windows. Châtillon made his escape at the very beginning of the tumult; but twelve hundred knights and two thousand men-at-arms glutted the rage of the citizens, and the partisans of the French in the superior council were hurried away to execution after a very brief trial before the municipality.

König was well aware that this insurrection would be regarded as a rebellion, if it continued to be directed by himself and his brother artisans; but that it would acquire the dignity of a war, if the princes of the ancient house of Flanders should place themselves at its head. He addressed himself to William of Juliers, the maternal grandson of Guy de Dampierre, who was a bitter enemy of the French; his brother had been taken prisoner at the battle of Furnes, and was generally believed to have been murdered in prison by the count of Artois. Juliers readily accepted the invitation: no sooner was he placed at the head of the insurgents than he marched to attack Ghent; but, the city being fortified, and its inhabitants overawed by the garrison, he was obliged

to retreat. Undaunted by this failure, he succeeded in making himself master of Sluys, Newport, Furnes, and Gravelines, all of which he united to the commonalty of Bruges. In the midst of his successes he was joined by his uncle, Guy de Dampierre the younger: the Flemings were inspired with fresh enthusiasm by the presence of the representatives of their ancient princes; they made themselves masters of Courtray, with the exception of the castle, which they left a detachment to blockade, and advanced to besiege Cassel.

Robert, count of Artois, on the first intelligence of the insurrection, had sent out orders for raising forces in every part of France: he had soon an army which, according to the testimony of an eye-witness, consisted of seven thousand five hundred knights of name, ten thousand archers, and fifty thousand infantry raised from the militia of the communes of France.* On the approach of such an overwhelming force, William de Juliers raised the siege of Cassel and retreated to join his uncle before Courtray. A hasty council was held: it was impossible for the Flemings to defend themselves in Courtray, while the castle was in the hands of their enemies; to retreat in the presence of the French cavalry, would be to expose themselves to being overtaken in the plains and cut off in detail; they therefore resolved to hazard a battle where they stood, and took up

* Villani, viii c. 55.

their position in the plains of Courtray behind a narrow canal which the French had not perceived,—in fact, it was little better than a ditch which drained the waters of the district into the river Lys. Here they made their preparations with the coolness which seems to result from the energies of despair. The few knights of Flanders who had joined the insurrection dismounted from their horses in order to share the perils of their fellow-countrymen on foot: the civic infantry, amounting to about twenty thousand men, were armed with a kind of pike called *Guttentag;* it was headed with steel and shod with iron, so that, when the buts were fixed in the ground, the bristling line presented a hedge of pike-heads to the charging cavalry. When the lines were formed, priests celebrated mass in front of the divisions; but at the conclusion, instead of receiving the host, each man knelt down and put a piece of earth into his mouth, intimating that he had vowed to die in defence of his country. Juliers and the young Dampierre hasted from rank to rank, exhorting the citizens to defend their lives and properties; and at the same time, to show that they recognized the claims of a mercantile aristocracy, they conferred the order of knighthood on Peter König and forty other members of the trading companies.

Robert d'Artois advanced with his army in ten divisions, each commanded by some illustrious noble. The constable de Nesle perceived that

the Flemings were drawn up in a crescent form; and, not being aware that this was caused by the bending shape of the canal, he proposed that one division should be sent to turn their flank and cut them off from the town of Courtray. Robert disliked the constable, and probably suspected him of disaffection, as he was married to a lady of the house of Flanders: he tauntingly answered, "What, sir! are you afraid of these rabbits, or have you a fellow-feeling for the breed?"—"Sire," replied the constable in fury, "if you will advance so far as I will, you will be very forward in the field." So saying, he galloped to his division, which led the van, and gave immediate orders to charge. The weather was intensely hot, the soil of the sandy plain was quite parched; the constable's division was consequently soon enveloped in a cloud of dust, which hid its proceedings from the remaining divisions. They, believing that victory was certain, galloped forward in furious haste to obtain a share of the spoil; squadron pressed on squadron with such eager haste that those in the rear were utterly unconscious of what was going on in their front. De Nesle's division was brought to a sudden check by the unexpected obstacle of the canal; it was thirty feet wide, and rather more than ten deep, so that it could not possibly be forded. No time was allowed for reflection: the squadrons, rushing madly forward from the rear, pushed those before them into the ditch, which was soon choked

by drowning men and horses; the whole French army, crowded into the curve formed by the bend of the canal, could neither halt nor deploy their lines; a few, more desperate than the rest, sought to force a passage over the bodies of their drowning companions, but these afforded too slippery a footing, and they only added to the heap of carnage accumulated in the fatal ditch. The horses of the remaining knights, checked in front and pressed forward from behind, became restive and unmanageable; they increased the confusion by their violent prancing and rearing, throwing many of their riders, to be trampled to death in the press. Dampierre and Juliers took advantage of the confusion; they crossed the canal at the extremes of the semi-circular bend, and attacked the French on both flanks and in the rear. It was no longer a fight, but a carnage: unable to manage their steeds, encumbered by their heavy armour, and held together in a narrow space, the bravest knights of France fell by the hands of half-naked artisans, whom they had been accustomed to despise; and of the Flemings it could be truly said,

> They were weary at eve, when they ceased to slay,
> Like reapers whose task is done.

In this disastrous battle — one of the earliest which infantry obtained over cavalry — the flower of the French nobility perished. Philip, who had hitherto believed himself irresistible, had to mourn

for the loss of his cousin of Artois, his chancellor, his constable, more than two hundred of his nobles, six thousand of his knights, and the complete dispersion of his army. By incredible exertions he got together a new army, and advanced to invade Flanders: but recent victory had given the Flemings confidence; their pikemen no longer feared to stand a charge of cavalry, and in several skirmishes the proud knights of France were driven to retreat before the gallant artisans. The rains of autumn overtook the French king before he had mustered sufficient courage to hazard a second general battle. The interruption of his convoys produced famine in his camp, and he was glad to purchase the means of safe retreat by concluding an armistice with the brave insurgents.

Old Guy de Dampierre and his two eldest sons were still detained prisoners in Paris, but he had a numerous family: several of his children had gone to seek their fortune as military adventurers in foreign lands. One of them, named Philip, had borne a conspicuous part in the conquest of the kingdom of Naples, and had been rewarded by Charles de Valois with the rich fiefs of Riéti and Luciano; but the love of his native land was more powerful than that of rank and wealth. He no sooner heard of the insurrection of Flanders than he resigned his fiefs to Charles; and, collecting together his followers, returned to his native land, which he reached in the June of 1303.

Touched by this display of generous devotedness, the Flemings proclaimed him their commander-in-chief; a rank to which he was well entitled by the experience which he had acquired in the wars of Italy. Under their new leader, the Flemings, not contented with defending their own frontiers, carried the war into France itself: sometimes defeated, and sometimes successful, their enthusiasm never varied; until at length king Philip agreed to make a truce for a year, and to liberate his old captive, the earl of Flanders, on condition that he should return to his captivity if hostilities were renewed. The crafty monarch appears to have imagined that the presence of the earl might lead to dissension in the councils of the insurgents: but old age and sufferings had developed the better feelings of Guy's nature; he thanked his subjects for their exertions, congratulated them on their success, and seriously bewailed his own misconduct, which had led to such calamitous results. During the year he made no attempt to open negotiations with king Philip, being well aware that the demands of the French would be too extravagant to be conceded. When the truce expired, he returned to his prison, where he soon after died in the eightieth year of his age.

Guy de Namur, son of the earl of Flanders, undertook an expedition against the earl of Zealand, and held him closely besieged in Zeirikzee. As the French navy was unable to cope with that

of Flanders, Philip, in order to save his ally, took into his pay a squadron of Genoese, commanded by Renier Grimaldi, an admiral of high reputation. Having been joined by the French navy, Grimaldi set sail for Zeirikzee: his approach was discovered by the Flemings; Guy de Namur immediately quitted the siege and hasted to the naval encounter. Grimaldi formed his ships in two lines, the French leading the van. As he seems to have anticipated, the Flemings easily mastered the French, and were felicitating themselves on victory, when their lines were broken by the Genoese division, borne upwards by the force of the rising tide. In a moment the fortune of the day was changed: the Flemish fleet was dispersed with severe loss; Guy de Namur and several of his best officers were made prisoners. Guy was immediately sent to the prisons of Paris, which might almost have been regarded as the mansion of his family.

This naval victory was soon followed by another, of more importance, gained by the king himself on land. The Flemings commanded by Philip de Riéti, whose resignation of his Neapolitan fiefs has been already recorded, had encamped their army near Mons en Puelle, for the purpose of preventing the French from undertaking the siege of Lille. King Philip, having forced the passage of the Lys, marched to the attack; the Flemings prepared for resistance by forming a double line of entrenchment with their baggage-waggons, leaving

five intervals as gates or sally-ports. Had they been immediately charged by the impetuous knights of France, as they had anticipated, they would have found their waggons a valuable line of defence; but the French had learned to respect their adversaries, and were too cautious to repeat the errors of Courtray. Instead of attacking the entrenchments, they harassed the Flemings by desultory skirmishes, whilst a body of slingers and archers from Languedoc kept up a continued and galling discharge of missiles on the exposed parts of their lines. Although it was near the end of September, the sun was as fiercely hot as in the middle of July: the Flemings, pent up in their lines, suffered more severely than the French, and were, besides, unable to obtain any refreshment, as their provision-carts and baggage-waggons had been formed into entrenchments. Towards the close of the day their patience failed them; they resolved to sally forth for a general attack, forming themselves into three divisions, commanded by William de Juliers, Philip de Riéti, and John of Namur. Their bravery all but succeeded; the first division surprised the king himself in his tent, and would have made him prisoner, but that he wore no royal ornament by which he could be recognized. Like success attended the other divisions; fifteen hundred cavaliers had already fallen, the rest were flying broken over the plain. Unfortunately, at this moment the Flemings dispersed to plunder

the French camp, just as king Philip had succeeded in rallying his body-guards, who had easily distanced the Flemish infantry in the chase. He brought them back to the charge: the Flemings made the most desperate efforts to form their ranks anew under the very lances of the knights, but the attempt was made too late; their ranks were everywhere pierced by charges of cavalry, and at length they fled in confusion, leaving six thousand of their men dead on the plain, and all their baggage a prey to the conquerors. Philip remained master of the bloody field: he ordered that all the French who had fallen should be honourably interred; but that the bodies of the Flemings, as obstinate rebels, should be denied the rites of burial.*

Philip de Riéti, whose division had suffered least, threw himself into Lille, which his royal namesake hastened to besiege. Two such victories as those of Zeirikzee and Mons filled the monarch with the belief that the insurrection was nearly at an end; he was unable to conceal his mortification and astonishment when he found that the citizens of Lille were resolved to make a vigorous defence. In less than three weeks after his victory he was astounded to learn that the Flemings had assembled a new army, and were advancing to encounter once more his victorious chivalry. John de Namur had

* Villani, viii. 78.—This venerable historian visited the field of Mons a few days after the battle.

found the citizens of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres burning with zeal to retrieve their late losses. On every side the cry was heard, "It is better for us to die with arms in our hands than to live in bondage." Sixty thousand soldiers were enrolled in a very few days; and as the citizens not only drew their swords, but opened their purses, John de Namur was ready to take the field with an army far superior to that of the king himself in its commissariat, equipment, and munitions of war. Philip was thrown into despair: he eagerly accepted the offers of the dukes of Brabant and Savoy, who offered themselves as mediators; consenting, as a preliminary, to the recognition of the ancient independence of Flanders. This being conceded, all the other terms were settled with little difficulty: the several members of the late earl's family were liberated from their prison, and Robert de Bethune, who was the eldest, was solemnly recognized hereditary prince of Flanders.

This peace was ill-observed on both sides: thirteen years of occasional hostilities, petty skirmishes, truces, and insincere negotiations, occupied the courtiers of Flanders and France; but the merchant returned to his books, and the artisan to his trade, leaving to others the care both of war and diplomacy.

In the year 1320, earl Robert visited Paris, accompanied by his daughter, and his son Louis, count de Nevers. He came to do homage to Philip the

Long; and, after his oath of fidelity had been received, he demanded the restoration of the cities which had been ceded as conditional securities to Philip the Fair, including Lille, Bethune, and Doway. Philip V. showed such indignation at this demand, that the earl feared a violation of his safe-conduct, and fled secretly from Paris towards the frontiers. On his way he was met by some of the deputies from the great commercial cities of Flanders: they informed him in very plain terms that they would not consent to have their trading interests sacrificed to the dignity of his earldom; they even declared, that, if he did not return and conclude the peace, they would continue their route to Paris and negotiate a treaty for themselves.* Robert retraced his steps; a new treaty was concluded, and one of its conditions was a marriage between the king's daughter and the grandson of the earl of Flanders. This was not the only mortification which Robert experienced from his subjects: he wished to disinherit his eldest living son Louis, whose mother, Golande, he had put to death for poisoning his son by a former wife, and to transfer his inheritance to a younger son, Robert of Cassel; but the citizens of Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres protested so strongly against such a proceeding, that the earl was forced to abandon his intentions. Louis obtained permission to retire to France on the condition that he should not return to Flanders

* Villani, ix. 120.

during the lifetime of his father. Louis died in exile a few months before his father, bequeathing his rights to his son of the same name, who was, as already stated, married to a French princess, daughter of Philip the Long.

Earl Robert had laboured even to the last hour of his life to secure the inheritance of Flanders for his favourite son Robert of Cassel. It was not known to what extent he had succeeded; and hence, Louis, on receiving intelligence of his grandsire's death, made all the haste in his power to reach Flanders, in order to claim his inheritance. The civic corporations, which had previously rescued his father, had taken good care to secure his rights; he encountered no opposition, but was received with joyous welcome in all the principal cities. A few weeks were sufficient to disgust him with the plain speaking and homely manners of the Flemings: he hastened back to enjoy the pleasures of Paris; but he had no sooner reached the capital, than he was arrested and thrown into prison by the reigning monarch, Charles IV., on the charge of having taken up the heritage of a royal fief without having first received investiture from the king. The feudal forms, which had been so long employed to restrict the rights of royalty, were now, as the monarchy began to acquire strength, rendered powerful instruments for humbling the pride of the nobility; the kings requiring from the great vassals the self-same submissions which

they had enforced on their sub-feudatories. Charles went further: he submitted it to the parliament of Paris, whether Louis was the legal heir to the earldom of Flanders, or whether it ought not to be partitioned between Robert of Cassel and his sisters. Earl Louis found means to avert the king's indignation; he was set at liberty after a very short detention, and the parliament of Paris passed a unanimous decree in favour of his rights, both as earl of Flanders, and of Nevers in right of his mother.

Few princes have been more enthusiastically received by their subjects than Louis on his accession to the earldom; but no very long time elapsed before the Flemings discovered that a foreign education had rendered him hostile to all the rights and privileges which they valued. Nurtured in the polished court of Paris,—a Frenchman in character, manners, and feelings,—Louis was incapable of comprehending the independent spirit of his wealthy and industrious subjects; he could not understand how persons having no pretensions to noble birth or feudal rank should still assert their claims to privileges and liberty. He felt that such demands were derogatory to his prerogative; and his reluctance to recognize them was encouraged by his chancellor Vézelay, one of his vassals from Nevers, whose father, the chancellor of France, had fallen in the battle of Courtray. Ere long, distrust and hatred took the place of those sentiments which

had been manifested towards the earl on his first arrival: it is probable that many of the wrongs inflicted by Louis and his chancellor should be attributed rather to their ignorance of trade and its complicated relations, than to a prepense purpose of inflicting injury. They were exclusively surrounded by the territorial aristocracy, men whose jealousy of the wealth and influence of the commercial aristocracy had been greatly exasperated by the recent proofs which the latter had given of their being able to wield the pen as well as the sword. The Flemish lords could not forgive the traders and artisans for having beaten the proud chivalry; they felt, that, while it was salvation to their country, it was ruin to their order.

In the usual style of feudal sovereigns, earl Louis bestowed on his great-uncle, John of Namur, the lordship of the navigation of the Scheldt. Angry remonstrances against this grant were made by the citizens of Bruges, which were repeated still more vehemently when it was found that the restrictions which John imposed on the navigation began seriously to injure the trade of the city. Louis paid no regard to these representations: but the citizens took the affair into their own hands; they marched against Sluys, took it by storm, razed its fortifications to the ground, and brought away John of Namur a prisoner. Unwilling, however, to come to an open breach with the earl, they permitted their captives to escape, and accepted the amnesty

which Louis offered. Similar scenes occurred in several other parts of Flanders; the feudal grants of Louis were set aside by insurrections, and he was obliged to be contented with their being so submissive as to accept an amnesty.

Far from supposing that his own misgovernment was the cause of these frequent disturbances, Louis attributed the blame to his uncle, Robert of Cassel, whom his grandfather had laboured so hard to make heir to the principality. Robert, at this time, laying aside all ambitious thoughts, was living tranquilly in the little town of Warneston, within nine miles of Lille: Louis, without even the form of inquiry, ordered his secretary to write to the people of the town, commanding them to seize and slay the lord of Cassel as a known and proved traitor. The secretary obeyed; but at the same time he despatched another messenger to put Robert on his guard, and this nobleman thus escaped from the wrath of his nephew. Louis discovered the source of his disappointment: he bitterly reproached his secretary, who replied that he had preferred the honour of his master to obedience; a reply which so enraged the earl that he threw his minister into prison. This anecdote soon got abroad, and had no small influence in swelling the rising indignation of the people. In the mean time heavy taxes were levied, under pretence of paying off the subsidy promised to France: the deputies from the different cities, assembled at

Courtray, being assured that more money had been raised than was sufficient to discharge the debt, demanded that the accounts should be laid before them for examination. Louis, to evade compliance with this awkward demand, or perhaps to intimidate the deputies, caused the suburb of Courtray, in which they assembled, to be fired: the flames spread more rapidly and extensively than he had anticipated; the whole town was burned to the ground on the 13th of June, 1325. Enraged at this outrage, the citizens flew to arms, and assailed the residence of the earl; several of his barons were slain in his defence: he was finally made prisoner, with five knights, two noble ladies, and several soldiers, all of whom were sent prisoners to Bruges. The earl was closely confined in the Hôtel de Ville; twenty-seven of his companions, convicted of having shared in the destruction of Courtray, were executed as incendiaries before his eyes. Most of the municipalities in Flanders voted that Louis was unworthy to reign, and offered the sovereignty to earl Robert of Cassel. But the citizens of Ghent, envious of those of Bruges, adhered to the cause of Louis, and sought the intervention of the king of France.

It was about this time that the mercantile and landed aristocracies of Flanders formed themselves definitely into hostile parties: the merchants and traders were anxious to maintain the independence of their country, as the sure basis of their repub-

lican institutions; while the nobles were anxious to become more closely connected with the French monarchy, as, without its support, they feared that they could not much longer maintain the principles of feudal subordination. Charles IV. of France was indisposed to favour the pretensions of the middle classes at home or abroad: he instantly sent an ambassador to demand the immediate liberation of Louis; and, when this was refused, he ordered the Flemings to be excommunicated by the bishop of Tournay, with the exception of the people of Ghent, who were exhorted to continue in their fidelity. It appeared soon that the Flemings could not be intimidated either by the menaces of the king or the curses of the bishop; Charles, therefore, offered his services as mediator: in the month of November, 1326, earl Louis was set at liberty, after having solemnly sworn that he would respect the privileges of Bruges, Ypres, and the other municipalities, and that Ghent should enter into the league of free cities.

"Perjuries of princes towards their subjects are too generally regarded as venial offences, while perjuries of subjects towards their princes are always esteemed crimes of the blackest dye."* Neither the monarchs of Europe nor the heads of the Christian church exhibited any surprise, much less disapprobation, when Louis, after having been liberated from prison, protested that his recent oath

* Sismondi, ix. 437.

had been extorted from him by force, and was therefore in no way binding on his conscience. He hastened to Paris to lay his complaint before the king and parliament: Charles gladly received an appeal, which, most probably, he had prompted; an army was already prepared; the lucrative commerce between France and the manufacturing cities was suspended; the Flemings, taken by surprise, and disheartened by the secession of Ghent, were obliged to submit and ask pardon. After some delay a new treaty was concluded, by which their privileges were confirmed, on condition of their paying very heavy fines to the earl and the king, and sending three hundred of the most wealthy citizens on a pilgrimage, to ask pardon of Heaven for the presumptuous sin of taking up arms to maintain their chartered rights.

It was at this time an opinion, generally diffused throughout Europe, that the wrath of God had fallen on the royal house of the Capets, and that the male line of Philip the Fair must soon become extinct. Crimes in abundance might be quoted to justify this expectation,—atrocious cruelties, open perjuries, the judicial murders of the Knights Templars, and the persecutions of the lepers; but, in the fourteenth century, more importance was attached to the disrespect with which Philip and his sons had treated the popes,* their frequent violations

* Two of the letters between Philip the Fair and pope Boniface VIII. deserve to be quoted as specimens of the diplomatic

of ecclesiastical immunities, and their custom of marrying within the prohibited degrees of relationship. Philip the Fair died in the very prime of life, at the age of forty-six, though to all appearance possessed of a most vigorous constitution. He left three sons: all arrived at the age of manhood, and were celebrated throughout Europe for their manly beauty; all three had been dishonoured by their wives about the same time, and had scandalized Christendom by instituting public suits for divorce, and publishing abroad every disgusting cir-

correspondence of the fourteenth century. The first is from the pope, and may be regarded as a summary of the extravagant pretensions made by the pontiffs in that age.

"Boniface pontiff, servant of the servants of God, to Philip king of France,—Fear God and keep his commandments. Learn that you are subject to us both in spiritual and temporal matters.

"If you have the ward of any benefices by the death of the incumbents, you are bound to account for the proceeds to their successors.

"If you have conferred any benefices, we pronounce your grants null *de jure*, and we revoke them *de facto*. Those who entertain a contrary opinion shall be regarded as heretics."

Turn we now to the king's reply:—

"Philip, by the grace of God, king of the French, to Boniface falsely calling himself pope, little or no greeting.

"Let your great stupidity learn that we are not subject to any earthly power in temporal matters; that the bestowing of benefices and vacant sees belongs to us by right of our crown; that we dispose of the revenues of vacant churches in right of our royal prerogative; that our gifts of sees are valid for the past and the future; and that we will maintain with all our might those on whom we have conferred, and shall confer, benefices.

"Those who suppose the contrary will be regarded by us as dolts and idiots."

cumstance of adultery. The eldest of these sons died at the age of twenty-six, and his posthumous child only lived five days: the second died at the age of thirty, having previously followed his only son to the grave: the last, Charles IV., had buried his two sons when he fell a victim to fatal disease; leaving to his kingdom the horrors of a succession disputed by the English house of Plantagenet and the French house of Valois. During this struggle, the contests between the merchants and nobles of Flanders became intimately connected with the wars between France and England: they were no longer collisions between conflicting interests, which excited only the attention of the Flemings; they rose into European importance; and thus the principles which they evolved, though not intrinsically more pregnant with valuable instruction than those which we have just examined, engaged a far greater share of public attention.

Earl Louis was one of the first great feudatories of France to recognize the right of Philip of Valois; he bore the sword of state at his coronation, having previously received the honour of knighthood from his hand. It was no secret that the new king shared the dislike with which the French nobles began to view the rising spirit of the communes. The cities of Artois and the Vermandois had shown strong symptoms of the sentiments of independence engendered by the pursuits of commerce and the enjoyment of wealth: Philip was anxious to

give them an example of his determination to support sovereign power; and the complaints of earl Louis, on whom new restraints had been imposed by his subjects, afforded the desired opportunity.

There were other reasons which induced Philip to engage eagerly in this war; by summoning a feudal army he obtained recognition from his vassals, for many of the French nobles, who had hesitated to acknowledge him, were sure to be led to his standard by their national passion for war. All the great feudatories of the French crown were, besides, fully impressed with the belief that they were personally interested in the cause of the earl of Flanders; they looked upon the successful revolt of vassals against their *suzerain* as likely to have a contagious influence; they knew that in every city of France the merchants and traders longed for the privileges and franchises which they saw enjoyed by the Flemings, and that they would not hesitate to take up arms to defend their rights if they were not deterred by the penal consequences. Finally, the gentlemen of France were persuaded that wars in Flanders would be a species of military pastime; they were armed at all points, and mounted on powerful steeds; their enemies were half-naked, and on foot; the superiority of cavalry over infantry was still a received principle of military tactics: victory was therefore deemed certain, while its rewards were known to be immense. "The rich stuffs, the precious robes, the gorgeous suits of armour carried

by the Flemish merchants from market to market, from city to city, and from castle to castle,—the price of which the bankrupt nobles of France scarcely ventured to ask,—seemed to be brought within their reach when they were to be procured at the trifling cost of spilling a little blood." *

France had never before seen so magnificent an army as that which took the field at the summons of Philip of Valois. Not only the great lords of France, but the princes of Holland and Western Germany, appeared in arms to support the great cause of feudal vassalage against civic freedom. No less than one hundred and seventy different banners were displayed in the ten divisions which the French made of their army; the mere titles of the princes and lords who were present would fill several pages. On the other hand, the Flemings, deserted by the entire body of their aristocracy and by the powerful city of Ghent, made preparations for a bold resistance: they chose three of the burgomasters for their leaders; and, in derision of the French, painted a cock† on their standards,—"the usurper of the French throne," said they, "will enter our towns when this cock crows." Had they been as patient as they were brave, their vaunts might have been amply fulfilled: their position on the heights above Cassel, strengthened by the fortifications of the town, was impregnable; but they

* Sismondi, Hist. des Franc. x. 20.

† *Gallus*, in Latin, signifies both a Frenchman and a cock.

were enraged at beholding the devastations practised by the French in the open country. Night after night they saw the flames of villages, fired by their enemies, rising on all sides, as far as the eye could reach; they were also weary of being detained more than a month inactive, while their business remained neglected; and they clamoured to be led against the enemy. Zonnekin, the burgomaster of Bruges, who had the chief command, visited the enemy's camp disguised as a fish-merchant; and, having acquainted himself with all the particulars of its position and divisions, resolved to gratify his countrymen by an immediate attack.

Froissart gives the following account of the battle of Cassel:

"Those that were in the garrison at Cassel set out one day, about vespers, with a design to defeat the king and all his army. They marched very quietly, without noise, in three divisions; the first of which advanced straight to the tents of the king, and was near surprising him as he was seated at supper, as well as his whole household.

"The second went to the tents of the king of Bohemia, and found him in the same situation. The third division attacked the quarters of the count of Hainault, and nearly surprised him: they pressed him so closely that he and his people had scarce time to arm themselves; and the lord of Beaumont, his brother, and his company, were in a

similar situation. All the three divisions came so quickly up to the tents, that neither the lords nor soldiers had time to assemble, or properly arm themselves; and they would all have been slain, if it had not been, as it were, a miracle of God: but, by his grace, each of these lords defeated his assailants, and so completely, that in the space of an hour, out of twelve thousand Flemings, not one escaped. Their captain was also killed.

"Nor did any of these lords receive any intelligence of the other until the business was finished. Of all the Flemings, not one turned his back; but they were all slaughtered on the spot, and lay in three large heaps, one upon the other. This battle happened in the year of grace 1328, on St. Bartholomew's day." *

Though Froissart had no sympathy with the insurgent Flemings, we see that he bears testimony to the boldness with which this enterprize was conceived, and the bravery with which it was executed. It would probably have been completely successful, had not the knights of Hainault and Bar been armed and arrayed for some marauding expedition; they were at some distance when the French camp was surprised, and, when they returned, they appeared to the exhausted assailants a new army. But the Flemings, under these disadvantageous circumstances, maintained the combat to the last; they had entered the hostile camp

* Froissart, Smith's edition, i. 30.

in three divisions, and three heaps of carcases marked the extreme spot to which the phalanxes had advanced. The gentlemen of France gave no quarter: out of sixteen thousand Flemings, who sallied down from Cassel, three thousand alone escaped.

Immediately after their victory, they entered Cassel, which they pillaged and wasted with the most savage cruelty, Poperingen, Ypres, and Bergues successively opened their gates to the victors. The burghers of Bruges would have defended their city, but the women implored that they should not be exposed to the chances of a storm; Philip and the earl entered the city in triumph, and the war was at an end. Before returning home, the king addressed the earl in the following terms: "Dear cousin, I restore you the earldom of which you were deprived; take care not to lose it again through the neglect of executing strict justice, or you will force me to resume the fief."

"Strict justice," in the royal vocabulary, meant the merciless extermination of the disaffected. Louis scarcely wanted such a recommendation to whet his spirit of savage revenge: all who had taken a share in the late insurrection, all who exhibited any signs of that energetic love of liberty which had enabled the Flemings to throw off the yoke, were pursued with the most virulent severity. It has been calculated, that in less than three months more than ten thousand Flemings were

publicly executed, and nearly all of them were put to death with the most excruciating tortures.* The fortifications of most of the cities were destroyed, and their municipal privileges abolished; they could only save themselves from absolute ruin by the payment of enormous contributions. Zeyher Jahnson, one of the brave leaders of the sally from Cassel, was taken prisoner near Ostend: he was exposed on the wheel at Bruges; his flesh was seared with hot irons, his limbs slowly broken, and, when the spite of his persecutors had been sufficiently gratified by his agonies, his head was struck off in the presence of his fellow-citizens, who did not even dare to bewail his fate. William the Bold, who had gone to the court of Brabant to implore some aid for his suffering countrymen, was delivered over by the duke to Philip of Valois: he too was slowly broken on the wheel, where he remained twenty-four hours in torture; his mangled body was then dragged by horses to a distant gibbet, where death put an end to his sufferings.† Thus ended the first act of the great struggle between the mercantile and landed aristocracy of Flanders.

* Oudegherst, c. 154. † Villani, x. 87.

CHAPTER VI.

Insurrections of the Middle Classes against Feudalism, continued. —Renewal of the Revolts of the Flemings. — Effect of the war in Flanders on the general politics of Europe, and particularly on the disputed succession to the crown of France.

AFTER Louis earl of Flanders had, as he imagined, crushed for ever the free spirit of his subjects, he removed to Paris, where he soon became distinguished as one of the most subservient courtiers that flattered the caprices of Philip de Valois. Edward III. of England had begun to assert his pretensions to the throne of France; more, however, with the hope of receiving some of the old continental provinces, which had been subject to the English crown, as a compensation for withdrawing his claim, than with any expectation of setting aside Philip, who had been generally recognized by the entire French people. The pope, aware of the sanguinary war which must ensue if the sword were once drawn, interfered to prevent hostilities, and there appeared to be some chances of a peaceful arrangement being effected under the sanction of religion. Philip's arbitrary and splenetic temper precipitated hostilities: he

engaged the earl of Flanders so completely in his service, that Louis issued orders for the arrest of all the English merchants in his dominions, and the confiscation of their property.

This violation of national faith was recommended to Louis chiefly by its influence in impoverishing his own subjects; though their commerce was the principal source of his enormous revenues, he would gladly have seen it destroyed, as a step towards reducing them to feudal bondage. No means could be devised more efficacious for this purpose than a war with England: the woollen manufacture was the great staple of the national industry of the Flemings; the artisans employed in the different branches of the manufacture were so numerous in most of the large towns as to form trading companies or corporations regularly organized under elective chiefs, and thus a species of discipline was introduced among the artisans which rendered them formidable in all the movements which the Flemings made against the oppression of their rulers. But the Flemish cloths were principally manufactured of English wool, so that peace with England was absolutely necessary to the prosperity of the trade.* Louis's subjects addressed to him the most pressing remonstrances against such an iniquitous proceeding, especially as Edward III. on the 10th of October, 1336, had in reprisal arrested all the

* Oudegherst, chap. 156.

Flemings in England. No attention was paid by the infatuated earl to the complaints of the English monarch, or the representations of his own subjects. Edward then addressed himself to the burgomasters and most influential persons in the principal cities; men who were thoroughly impressed with the great truth, that peace between two countries connected by commercial ties is essential to the prosperity of both. The citizens of Ghent, who had hitherto sided with the aristocratic party, took the lead in asserting the principle of trade and of freedom, chiefly through the influence of the celebrated brewer, Jacob Von Arteveld, one of the most remarkable men of his age.

Froissart gives the following character of this renowned demagogue:

"There was in Ghent a man that had formerly been a brewer of metheglin, called Jacob Von Arteveld, who had gained so much favour and power over the Flemings, that everything was done according to his will. He commanded in all Flanders, from one end to the other, with such authority that no one dared to contradict his orders. Whenever he went out into the city of Ghent, he was attended by three or four score armed men on foot, among whom were two or three that were in his secrets: if he met any man whom he hated or suspected, he was instantly killed; for he had ordered those who were in his confidence to remark whenever he should make a particular sign on meet-

ing any person, and to murder him directly without fail, or waiting further orders, of whatever rank he might be. This happened very frequently, so that many principal men were killed; and he was so dreaded, that no one dared to speak against his actions, or scarce to contradict him, but were all forced to entertain him handsomely.

"When his companions before-mentioned had conducted him to his hotel, each went home to his dinner, and, immediately after, returned to the street before his house, where they remained making a noise and brawling until he pleased to come out, and go round the town to pass his time and amuse himself; and thus was he escorted until he chose to go to supper. Each of these soldiers had four Flemish groats a-day as wages, and for his expenses, which he had paid to him very regularly every week. He had also in every town and castlewick through Flanders sergeants and soldiers in his pay, to execute his orders and serve him as spies, to find out if any were inclined to rebel against him, and to give him information.

"The instant he knew of any such being in a town, he was banished or killed without delay; and none were so great as to be exempted, for so early did he take such measures to guard himself. At the same time he banished all the most powerful knights and esquires from Flanders, and such citizens from the principal towns as he thought were in the least favourable to the earl; seized one-half

of their rents, giving the other moiety for the dower of their wives and support of their children. Those that were banished, of which the number was very considerable, resided for the most part at St. Omer, and were called *les Avolez*. To speak the truth, there never was in Flanders, or in any other country, count, duke, or prince who had such perfect command as Jacob Von Arteveld. He collected the rents, the duties on wine, and other taxes belonging to the earl, though they were the earl's lawful revenue, in whatever part of the country of Flanders he might reside; he raised, also, extraordinary subsidies, which he spent and gave without rendering account to any one. When he said he was in want of money, he was immediately believed,—and well it was for them who did believe him, for it was perilous to contradict him; and, if he wished to borrow money of any of the citizens, there was no one that dared to refuse him." *

We have already remarked that Froissart had no esteem or respect for anything but noble birth and chivalrous qualifications; he was utterly incapable of comprehending the enthusiasm which liberty inspires, or the intellectual supremacy over the multitude acquired by talent, eloquence, and integrity. While he grossly misrepresents the use which Arteveld made of his power, he omits all mention of the fact that the earl's officers had plotted the assassination of the popular leader, and

* Froissart, Smith's edition, i. 42.

that the entire secret of his influence was his zeal to prevent the ruin which the earl's misgovernment and his insane hostility to trade were likely to bring on the whole trading community. Edward III. formed a wiser estimate of Arteveld; he sent the bishop of Lincoln as his ambassador to the brewer of metheglin, "paying as much deference to the nobility derived from the intelligence bestowed by God, as to the conventional rank arising from the capricious institutions of man."*

We have already said that a party allied, or rather enslaved, to the landed aristocracy, had been formed in the manufacturing cities of Flanders, and, such indeed, ever will be found in all trading communities where fashion is sufficiently powerful to render men ashamed of their order. This party was very influential in Ghent; notwithstanding all the calamities which the French had inflicted on their country, they felt pride in the reflection that the earldom of Flanders was the premier peerage of France, and were willing to compromise the substantial interests of the municipalities to preserve this idle bauble. Arteveld, therefore, recommended to Edward to seek the aid of the Flemings, not as king of England, but as king of France. "Since he claims the crown of France," said this clever statesman, "let him at once interfere in his capacity of sovereign between us and our ruler; let him declare himself the legal protector of our

* Meyer's Institutes, i. 17.

franchises and privileges, and we will hasten to recognize him as our monarch: but, were we to negotiate with him as king of England, we should put ourselves in the position of rebels to our immediate lord, and traitors to his and our *suzerain*." M. de Siger, or Zeyer,—an old knight who lived much respected in Ghent, and who, by a punning allusion to his lands in Contressin, was commonly called "the lord of Courtesy,"—received the English ambassador at his house, but does not appear to have taken any share in the negotiations with Arteveld. He was, however, the victim selected by Philip of Valois; no sooner did that monarch hear of the transactions at Ghent, than he sent peremptory orders to the earl of Flanders to have the old knight beheaded. Louis treacherously invited "the lord of Courtesy" to visit him at Ruremonde, where he had a garrison composed of feudal retainers from his hereditary estates in the Nivernois; the knight immediately obeyed, but he was arrested at the gates of the town, and beheaded without the ceremony of a trial. "This," says Froissart, "caused infinite grief to many, for he was much beloved by the gentry of the country; and it created much ill-will against the earl." Louis, who had advanced to Bruges, and planted his standards in the market-place, was there encountered by Arteveld and the militia of Ghent: a severe conflict took place, but at length the courage of the artisans prevailed; the earl fled to Cadsant, and having reinforced its garrison returned to Paris.

Guy, the natural brother of Louis, was appointed governor of Cadsant; a place to which considerable importance was attached, from the facilities which it afforded for privateers and cruisers to annoy the English shipping. So much mischief was done, that the English monarch allowed a detachment to be separated from the armament prepared to invade France, for the purpose of putting an end to the annoyances of his subjects from the buccaneers of Cadsant. The forces designed for this expedition amounted only to six hundred men-at-arms, and two thousand archers; while Guy of Flanders had under his command five thousand picked men: but the English were commanded by the earl of Derby and Sir Walter Manny, whose deeds of heroism were destined at no distant day to rank first in the annals of chivalry.

Froissart has given us the following account of the battle of Cadsant, which was the herald and precursor of a long and sanguinary war:

"When the English saw the town of Cadsant, whither they were bending their course to attack those that were within it, they considered that, as the wind and tide were in their favour, in the name of God and St. George they would run close up to it.

"They ordered the trumpets to sound, and each made himself quickly ready; they ranged their vessels, and, placing the archers on the prows, made full sail for the town. The sentinels and

guards at Cadsant had plainly perceived the approach of this large fleet, and, taking it for granted that it must be English, had already armed and placed themselves upon the dikes and the sands, with their banners in their proper position before them. They had also created a number of knights upon the occasion, as many as sixteen: their numbers might be about five thousand, taking all together, very valiant knights and bachelors, as they proved by their deeds. Among them was Sir Guy of Flanders, a good knight, but a bastard, who was very anxious that all his train should do their duty; Sir Dutres de Halluyn, Sir John de Rhodes, Sir Giles de l'Estrief, Sir Simon and Sir John de Bouquedent, who were then knighted, and Peter d'Aglemoustier, with many other bachelors and esquires, valiant men-at-arms. There was no parley between them, for the English were as eager to attack as the Flemings were to defend themselves. The archers were ordered to draw their bows stiff and strong, and to set up their shouts: upon which, those that guarded the haven were forced to retire, whether they would or not; for this discharge did much mischief, and many were maimed and hurt. The English barons and knights then landed, and with battle-axes, swords, and lances combated their enemies. Many gallant deeds of prowess and courage were done that day: the Flemings fought valiantly, and the Eng-

lish attacked them in all the spirit of chivalry. The gallant earl of Derby proved himself a good knight, and advanced so forward at the first assault that he was struck down; and then the lord of Manny was of essential service to him, for by his feats of arms he covered him, and raised him up, and placed him out of danger, crying, 'Lancaster for the earl of Derby!' They then closed with each other: many were wounded, but more of the Flemings than of the English; for the English archers made such continual discharges from the time they landed, that they did them much damage.

"The battle was very severe and fierce before the town of Cadsant, for the Flemings were good men, and expert in arms; the earl had selected and placed them there to defend the passage against the English, and they were desirous of performing their duty in every respect, which they did. Of the barons and knights of England there were, first, the earl of Derby, son of Henry of Lancaster, surnamed Wryneck; the earl of Suffolk, Lord Reginald Cobham, Lord Lewis Beauchamp, Lord William, son of the earl of Warwick; the Lord William Beauclerk, Sir Walter Manny, and many others, who most vigorously assaulted the Flemings. The combat was very sharp and well fought, for they were engaged hand to fist; but at length the Flemings were put to the rout, and more than three thousand

killed, as well at the haven as in the streets and houses. Sir Guy, the Bastard of Flanders, was taken prisoner. Of the killed were Sir Dutres de Halluyn, Sir John of Rhodes, the two brothers Bouquedent, Sir Giles de l'Estrief, and more than twenty-six other knights and esquires. The town was taken and pillaged, and when everything was put on board the vessels, with the prisoners, it was burnt. The English returned without accident to England.

"The king made the Lord Guy of Flanders pledge his troth that he would remain a prisoner; but, in the course of the year, he turned to the English, and did his homage and fealty to the king."*

On the 22nd of May, 1338, Edward III. disembarked at Antwerp; but found, to his great mortification, that none of the allies, on whose aid he had counted, were disposed to afford him active assistance. Philip and Louis had found it necessary to disarm the just anger of the Flemings. Early in April the earl came to Bruges, whence he proceeded to Ghent; in both places he confirmed the franchises which the citizens had obtained from Philip of Alsace in the preceding century, and brought them new charters from Philip of Valois, redressing all the grievances of which the Flemings had complained during the last thirty years. This prudence had such an effect that Edward could only

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 44.

obtain neutrality from the Flemings; he was even obliged to promise that he would not march through their country for the purpose of attacking France. Arteveld, however, was not the dupe of the concessions which fear had extorted from the earl, and policy from Philip VI. He warned the citizens of Ghent and Bruges that the French would resume these grants as soon as they had completely alienated the Flemings from their English friends. Mutual distrust soon occasioned mutual acts of violence: before the end of the year Louis fled from Dixmude, where the deputies of Flanders were assembled, persuaded that a plot had been formed to seize his person, and deliver him into the custody of Arteveld. He never stopped until he reached St. Omer, and so rapid was his flight that he abandoned all his equipages.

Two indecisive campaigns had exhausted the strength of the English monarch; he resolved to have recourse to diplomacy, and, in the December of 1389, he convened an assembly of deputies from all parts of the Netherlands, in Brussels, for the purpose of concerting future operations. Here, by the address of Von Arteveld, a treaty was concluded between the duchy of Brabant and the earldom of Flanders, or rather between the free commercial states of both countries, by which they severally engaged to combine in defence of their common privileges, and to submit all disputes to the arbitration of twelve deputies from both states,

who were to assemble three times a-year. Edward III. treated Arteveld with the greatest respect and consideration, admitting him to his most intimate confidence; and this great citizen, on all occasions, shewed himself equal, if not superior, to the princes, prelates, and nobles with whom he was brought into collision. He displayed as much of wisdom in the cabinet, and conduct in the field, as he did of eloquence in rousing the people, and firmness in restraining their excesses. Far from seeking a rupture with king Philip or the earl of Flanders, when they shewed a desire to negotiate and concede the rights unjustly withheld from the citizens, he had eagerly embraced the opportunity of obtaining a redress of grievances without drawing the sword. He demanded that Philip should restore to Flanders the cities of Lille, Doway, and Bethune, of which the French had wrongfully held possession since the time of Philip the Fair. When he found that this restitution could not be obtained, he endeavoured to make earl Louis comprehend that he never could have such a favourable opportunity of recovering the inheritance of his ancestors as that which the English alliance afforded; but the earl valued Nevers and Rhetel, his feudal counties in France, far more than his earldom of Flanders, and refused to abandon the cause of king Philip. Arteveld then represented to his fellow-citizens that "their count was too warmly attached to the court of

France, where the burgess class was treated with contumely and insult; where commerce was constantly exposed to the pillage of plundering knights and nobles; where the liberties and franchises of the cities were treated as usurpations on the rights of royalty and nobility; and, consequently, where all his animosity against the immunities of the Flemings was sure to be fostered and encouraged. Edward III." he continued, "is sufficiently known to us by his residence amongst us; we are assured that he has learned how to conduct himself in his dealings with a free people. He claims to be king of France as well as Philip; he takes the title in his public acts, on his coins, and on his standards. The right of both is doubtful; its determination rests with us; but we neither break our treaties nor our oaths in joining that claimant of the French crown who exhibits most affection towards us, and most steadily adheres to the engagements contracted by his ancestors."*

At the close of the former war, the Flemings had bound themselves to the court of Rome to maintain peace with France under a penalty of two millions of florins, payable at the renewal of hostilities; but they were easily persuaded that this engagement would not be violated when they supported the cause of one pretender to the French crown rather than that of another. Edward made great exertions to induce the earl of Flanders to

* Meyer, Ann. Fland. lib. xii.

join in this treaty; he offered to grant large immunities to the Flemish merchants in England, to bestow his daughter Isabella on the earl's eldest son, and to give him investiture of Artois. As Louis steadily refused to separate from Philip, Edward, as king of France, signed a treaty at Ghent with the magistrates of the Flemish towns on the 28th of January, 1340; by which he recognized all their rights, abolished the engagements they had made with Philip the Fair under the sanction of the church; assented to the restitution of Lille and the other cities which had been severed from Flanders; and promised to add to this cession the French towns of Tournay and Termonagne, which by their position, institutions, and manners seemed naturally to belong to Flanders.

Edward was well aware of the great advantage which must result from the recognition of his claims by the Flemings: he took advantage of the circumstance to issue a proclamation, addressed to the prelates, peers, and municipalities of France, declaring that Philip of Valois had taken advantage of his tender age to usurp his inheritance, and that, having arrived at the age of manhood, he was resolved to assert his rights. He declared that, trusting in God, and in the assistance of all who felt interested in the maintenance of justice, he had resumed the title and government of his rightful kingdom; that he had been already recognized by the Flemings,

whose example he proposed to the imitation of all Frenchmen; promising that he would observe the good laws and customs of St. Louis, that he would never injure his subjects by adulterating the coin, and that he would govern the kingdom, not after his own caprice, but according to the counsels of the peers, prelates, and commons of France. Having issued this proclamation, he returned to England, leaving at Ghent his queen Philippa, with the earls of Derby and Salisbury, as pledges to the Flemings that he would not abandon them after they had so warmly embraced his cause.

In the mean time the French garrisons stationed on the frontiers of Flanders undertook frequent marauding expeditions both into Flanders and Hainault, although the latter country was at peace with France, and its young count one of Philip's warmest partisans. William of Hainault was the nephew of Philip, and the brother-in-law of Edward; he was courageous, haughty, and educated in the highest principles of chivalry. Believing that he was despised by his uncle, he summoned his nobles and knights to meet him at Mons, in order that they might discuss the means for enforcing respect to the territories of their lord, and avenging the insults which had been offered to his dignity. After a long deliberation, it was resolved that letters of full defiance should be borne to Philip; and they were entrusted to the abbot of

St. Crispin, after they had been formally signed by the principal nobles of the Netherlands. Philip, who believed that Edward's return to England was a sure proof of his determination to abandon the war, treated the defiance of the Hainaulters with contempt. "Tell your young fool who rules you," he replied, "that he is only tempting me to burn and lay waste his entire country." This insult increased the rage of the Hainaulters: the young earl, assisted by his uncle, Sir John of Hainault, "collected men-at-arms, summoned all the knights and esquires in Brabant and Flanders, as well as in his own country, and exerted himself so much that in a short time he got together a body of ten thousand horsemen well equipped." * The object of attack was Aubenton, a town enriched by several cloth manufactories, and defended by a strong garrison. After a spirited resistance, Aubenton was stormed and burned to the ground; more than forty villages in the surrounding country suffered the same fate; the young earl was prevented by his advisers from carrying his ravages further, and, having brought back his army, he passed over into England to make a stricter alliance with Edward against their common enemy.

The garrisons which Philip had placed in Tournay, Lille, Doway, and Bethune, composed either of restless knights or military adventurers, relieved the irksomeness of garrison duty by marauding ex-

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 61.

cursions into the Netherlands. Philip's son, John duke of Normandy, afterwards king of France, was unable to check these forays, though he had wisdom enough to discover that they only rendered his father's enemies more resolute in their support of his rival's claims to the crown. "Sir John de Roye, at that time in Tournay, and Sir Matthew de Trie, marshal of France, together with Sir Godemar de Faye, and many other knights, collected a thousand men strongly armed and well mounted, with three hundred crossbow-men, as well from Tournay as from Lille and Doway: they set out from Tournay one evening after supper, and marched so expeditiously that they came before Courtray about daybreak, and before sunrise had collected all the cattle hereabouts. Some of their light-horse advanced to the gates of the town, and killed and wounded many in the suburbs: then they retreated without loss, and placed the river Lys on their return between them and the booty which they had carried off that day. They brought into Tournay more than ten thousand sheep; and of swine, beeves and kine as many more." *

Artaveld, who was at this time in Ghent, vowed revenge: he sent circulars to the principal towns of Flanders to send their militia to meet him on a certain day before Tournay; and he invited the earls of Salisbury and Suffolk, who were quartered at Ypres, to meet him at the same rendezvous.

* Froissart, ut suprà, i. 63.

"When the two earls," says Froissart, "received the letter, they would not for their honour's sake make any delay, but sent to inform Von Artaveld that they would be with him at the appointed time and place. They soon set out from Ypres with about fifty lances and forty crossbow-men, and took the road where he was waiting for them. They continued their route; but, as they were forced to pass near the outskirts of Lille, it was soon known in that town: accordingly fifteen hundred horse and foot were secretly armed, and sent out in three divisions to lie in wait, so that these lords might not escape from them. The earls and their company followed the guidance of Sir Vauflart de la Croix, who had long made war upon the people of Lille, and still continued so to do whenever he had an opportunity; — it was for this purpose that he was come to Ypres. He thought himself quite certain of conducting the earls in safety, as he was well acquainted with all the roads in those parts; and he would have succeeded now, if those of Lille had not cut a great trench near their town, which was not there before.

"When Sir Vauflart came to this trench, and saw that their road was cut off, he was quite astonished, and said to the earls, 'My lords, we cannot go farther this way, without putting ourselves in the power of those of Lille. Ride on, therefore, for we have promised Jacob Von Artaveld that we would be with him some time this day.'

The English rode on without care: Sir Vauflart said to them, 'It is true, my lords, that you have taken me for your guide in this expedition, and I have remained with you all this winter at Ypres, and have many thanks to give you and all your attendants; but, if it should happen that those of Lille make a sally upon us, do not fancy that I shall wait for them, for I shall save myself as fast as I can. If by any accident I should be taken, my head would pay for it, which is much dearer to me than your company.' The lords laughed heartily, and told him they would excuse him if he should do so. And, as he imagined, so it fell out; for, by not taking more precaution, they were surprised by one of the parties from Lille, who cried out, 'Stop! stop! you cannot pass here without our leave;' and immediately the lancemen and crossbow-men fell on the English.

"As soon as Sir Vauflart saw what was going on, he took care not to advance farther; but, turning about as quickly as possible, galloped out of danger. The two earls fell into the hands of their enemies, and were taken as if in a net; for the ambuscade was placed between hedges and ditches in a very narrow road, so that they could neither advance nor retreat to gain the open country: however, when they saw their mischance, they dismounted, and defended themselves as well as they could, killing and wounding a great many of their opponents: but it was all in vain, for fresh forces

from Lille were continually pouring upon them. They were, therefore, taken prisoners; and a young brisk esquire of Limousin, nephew to pope Clement, was killed for the sake of his beautiful armour after he had surrendered himself, which made many men angry. The two earls were kept prisoners in the market-place of Lille, and were afterwards sent to the king of France, who promised that those of Lille should be well rewarded for the good service they had done him."* This misfortune induced Artaveld to abandon the expedition; he dismissed his soldiers and returned to Ghent.

Philip soon became aware that these marauding expeditions tended to increase the exasperation of the Flemings without in the slightest degree lowering their courage; he resolved then once more to try the effect of conciliatory measures; he sent ambassadors to offer them a complete remission of all their debts to the crown of France, the suppression of all the ecclesiastical censures which they had incurred, complete neutrality for their territories during the war, and full enjoyment of all their commercial privileges, if they would abandon the cause of Edward. They very coolly replied, that Edward had already granted them everything which Philip had offered, and, consequently, that they had no need of receiving the same concessions a second time. Phi-

* Froissart, ubi suprà.—According to Dugdale, it was not the earl of Suffolk who was made prisoner, but his son Robert de Ufford le Fitz, as he was called.

lip applied for aid to the pope, who had embraced his cause; Benedict XII. immediately authorized the bishops of Cambray and Tournay to lay the earldom of Flanders under an interdict. To the great consternation of the Flemings, all their priests obeyed the papal mandate; public worship ceased to be celebrated in the churches; the bells no longer summoned congregations to prayer; marriages were unblest by the priest; infants remained unbaptized, and the rites of Christian burial were refused to the dead! Edward saw the evils which must result from such an appeal to superstition; he sent a number of English priests to Flanders, who disregarded the papal edicts and performed the services of the church without scruple.

In the mean time John, duke of Normandy, having collected an army of six thousand horse and eight thousand foot, invaded Hainault, where no preparations were made for resistance. The earl was absent, and his army dispersed; but several of his knights made a gallant resistance, harassed the French by repeated skirmishes, beat up their quarters and cut off stragglers. These desultory enterprizes did not hinder the duke of Normandy from pillaging the country and burning the villages. He then "came before Quesnoy, even up to the barriers, and made a feint as if he intended to attack it; but it was so well filled with men-at-arms and heavy artillery, that the French only lost their pains. Nevertheless, they skirmished a

little before the barriers; but they were soon forced to retire, for those of Quesnoy let them hear their cannons and bombards,* which flung large iron bolts in such a manner as made the French afraid for their horses." †

During the civil wars of Flanders many of the artisans in the smaller towns, particularly those engaged in the woollen manufactures, unable to endure the exactions of their lords, and wearied by the repeated devastations of the country, sought refuge in England, where they were welcomed by the politic Edward, who clearly saw that national

* This is the first mention of fire-arms by a European historian; but Froissart names them as things familiarly known, without expressing any surprise or giving a description of their nature, as he would assuredly have done if they had been novelties. In fact, the use of inflammable and explosive mixtures for the purposes of war seems to have been common in the East from the remotest ages; allusions are made to it in the old legends respecting the fabulous expeditions of Hercules and Bacchus against India. The great difficulty is, to determine who was the first to discover that the propelling force could be concentrated and directed by confining the explosive mixture in tubes. Europeans of various nations obtained a knowledge of gunpowder from the Arabs nearly at the same time, but they were slow to discover its importance: it seems probable that cannon were first used only for the defence of fortified towns, being such cumbrous and unwieldy machines that they seemed incapable of being carried about with an army. Edward III. is believed to have been the first European general who employed artillery in the field; he had several pieces of ordnance at the battle of Crecy, fought four years after the siege mentioned in the text, and they are said to have greatly contributed to his victory.

† Froissart, ut suprà, i. 67.

industry was the true source of national wealth. This expatriation of the industrious classes from Flanders was increased by the monopolizing spirit of the manufacturers themselves, particularly those who resided in the great cities. They wished to restrain the pursuit of the most lucrative branches of industry to the members of their own companies and corporations, as if they had resolved to establish mercantile orders of chivalry as adjuncts to a mercantile aristocracy. "The exemption of England from a similar mischief appears to have been one of the many advantages of its insular situation, which permitted manufacturing industry to seek in the villages a retreat from the oppressions of incorporated towns, without incurring the danger of exposure to foreign hostility." * It is a curious instance of the similarity between different branches of industry, that the cotton manufacture like the woollen is mainly indebted to villages for its prosperity, for it found in sequestered nooks a shelter from the brutal and ignorant hostility to machinery which menaced it with total destruction. So far as the imperfect records of the period enable us to determine, the nobles of England united with their monarch in encouraging the woollen manufacture; they felt the importance of having a market for their agricultural produce, both wool and grain, at their own doors. It is true that they were not content with this legitimate gain, and

* Miller's History, Phil. Illus. ii. 154.

that they passed several statutes to keep down the rate of agricultural labour, which of course had been raised by the competition of manufacturing employment, and that they tried several strange legislative devices to secure to themselves the profits of the wool-merchants; but, on the whole, manufactures were left at more freedom in England than in any other European country, and they flourished accordingly. It was the great increase of national wealth produced by the woollen manufactures which enabled England to maintain the long wars of Edward III. and Henry V. in France; just as the rapid developement of industry and wealth resulting from the cotton manufactures was the chief support of the late expensive wars against the French Republic and Napoleon.

Philip and his nobles were, on the other hand, such bitter enemies to commerce and manufactures, that they ill-treated the Genoese sailors who manned their fleets, and inspired them with such a hatred of aristocracy, that they revolted against their nobles, deprived them of the government, and installed one of their own body as ruler under the title of duke. Having thus deprived his fleet of experienced sailors, Philip entrusted the command of it to some of his courtiers utterly ignorant of naval affairs, joining with them in the commission an Italian adventurer, named Barbavara, whom the French nobles despised as a barbarous corsair. Edward, with far inferior forces, encountered the French fleet off Sluys. In spite of Barbavara's remon-

strances, Philip's admirals had crowded their ships together in a narrow space, so that it was impossible to manœuvre their vessels; in fact, the French were so ignorant, that, when the English tacked to gain the advantage of the sun and wind, they raised loud shouts, believing that Edward was flying before them. The English bore down upon the motionless French with full sail; the shock threw the whole of Philip's navy into confusion: but, as the French were more than four to one, they maintained the combat for several hours; indeed, their vessels were so crowded together that they had no choice but to fight, for to fly was impossible. Barbavara escaped with his squadron, but all the French ships were either taken or destroyed; the French admirals and thirty thousand of their men were either slain or drowned. It deserves to be remarked that this brilliant victory was won chiefly by the mercantile navy of England, for Edward's fleet was composed of squadrons contributed by the principal trading towns. Such a signal proof of the advantages of commerce was not likely to lose its effect on the wisest of the Plantagenets.

The naval victory at Sluys did not produce the advantages which Edward and Artaveld expected; the great object of the latter was to form a compact alliance between Hainault, Brabant, and Flanders, by which the privileges and franchises of the commercial towns in the three principalities should be placed under the protection of the English monarch. To this proposal the lords of the respec-

tive countries had insuperable objections: such dissensions arose in the allied camp before Tournay that Edward gladly consented to a truce for six months; which might probably have led to a peace, had not a disputed succession in Brittany led the kings of France and England to renew the war on a different battle-ground.

The spirit of monopoly injured the Flemings more than all the disasters of war: earl Louis had granted to Ghent, Ypres, and Bruges the exclusive privilege of manufacturing cloths; but the other towns and villages insisted on their right to enjoy the advantages of lucrative industry, and prepared to defend it by force of arms. Louis took advantage of the crisis to appear in the three cities as the determined supporter of the monopoly; for the moment all his cruelties and exactions were forgotten, in gratitude for his gracious permission to the burghers of the three cities to oppress their brethren in the neighbouring towns, even Artaveld was deceived, and led an army against the supporters of free trade. He was soon undeceived; when he returned victorious, he was arrested by the earl and thrown into prison. Louis, however, found that he had proceeded too hastily; Artaveld's numerous partisans took up arms, and demanded his liberation: the earl was forced to submit; but he was so indignant at the disappointment that he once more quitted Flanders and returned to Paris. At this crisis pope Clement VI. sent two

legates to command the Flemings to submit implicitly to their liege lords; the citizens replied that they were loyal to Edward, whom they recognized as the legitimate king of France, and that there was no violation of duty with which they could reproach themselves. In reply, the legates published an anathema against all who refused obedience to Philip, as if the pope's recognition of his title had made revolt against that monarch rebellion against God.

Monopoly is the prolific parent of confusion and abuses; the artisans of Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, not content with excluding the other towns of Flanders from the benefit of manufactures, began to quarrel amongst themselves respecting emoluments and wages. The weavers insisted that the fullers received too large a share of profits, without perceiving that, if their complaint was well-founded, the only remedy was to throw the fulling trade open to the public competition of all Flanders: the spinners asserted that the weavers unfairly cut down the price of their yarn, but did not see that this would be impossible if the markets were perfectly open. Artaveld appears to have discovered that free-trade was the only remedy for these disorders; and he was, therefore, anxious to transfer the government of Flanders from earl Louis, the supporter of monopoly, to the English prince of Wales, who was unconnected with any of the privileged parties. All those who had a vested in-

terest in wronging their neighbours were immediately in arms; and none were more violent against Artaveld than the operatives, whose advantage he sought by enlarging the sphere of their employment. In all countries we have found occasional outbursts of popular indignation against common honesty and common sense: men get persuaded that some tortuous means may be devised of raising the rate of profits or of wages above its market-price, never pausing to consider that the regulation of the market-price is no more in their power than the direction of the winds; and so they frame statutes and form combinations to extort illegitimate gains, and, like all other plunderers, hesitate at no act of violence to effect what is nothing better than ill-disguised robbery. Such a delusion seized on the artisans of Ghent, when Edward, on the invitation of Artaveld, brought the prince of Wales to Flanders. The commotion that ensued, and the murder of Artaveld, cannot be better related than in the picturesque language of Froissart:

"Jacob Von Artaveld, the citizen of Ghent that was so much attached to the king of England, still maintained the same despotic power over all Flanders. He had promised the king of England that he would give him the inheritance of Flanders, invest his son, the prince of Wales, with it, and make it a duchy instead of an earldom. Upon which account the king was at this period, about St. John the Baptist's day, 1345, come to Sluys

with a numerous attendance of barons and knights. He had brought the prince of Wales with him, in order that Jacob Von Artaveld's promises might be realised. The king remained on board his fleet in the harbour of Sluys, where he kept his court. His friends in Flanders came thither to see and visit him; and there were many conferences between the king and Jacob Von Artavéld on one side, and the councils from the different capital towns on the other, relative to the agreement before mentioned: as to which, those from the country did not unite in sentiment with the king, nor with Von Artaveld, who kept continually reminding them of their quarrel, and exhorting them to disinherit earl Louis, their natural lord, and his youngest son Louis, in favour of the son of the king of England; but they declared they never would consent to such a thing. At the last conference, which was held in the harbour of Sluys, on board the king's ship the Catharine, (which was of such enormous size that wonders might be told of it,) they made this unanimous reply: 'Dear sir, the request you have made has given us great uneasiness, and may in time to come be prejudicial to Flanders and our successors. True it is that there is not in the world any prince whom we love so much, or for whose profit and advantage we would exert ourselves so greatly as for you; but we alone cannot agree to this proposition, unless all the commonalties of Flanders give their con-

sent. Therefore each of us will return to our different towns, and will explain in a general way this business to the inhabitants, when, if the greater part of them shall consent, we also will agree to it. We will return to you again within a month, and bring such answers as we hope will be satisfactory.'

"Neither the king of England nor Jacob Von Artaveld could at that time obtain more or any other answer. They wished to have had a shorter day appointed, but in vain; so the king answered he was satisfied it should be as they determined. The conference broke up, and each returned to the town from whence he had been deputed.

"Jacob Von Artaveld remained some little time longer with the king of England, in order to be made acquainted with all his affairs: he in return promised and assured him that he would bring his countrymen over to his opinion; but he deceived himself, and did wrong in staying behind, and not being at Ghent at the time when the citizens who had been deputed by the corporations of the town arrived there; for as soon as they were returned, taking advantage of the absence of Von Artaveld, they collected a large meeting of high and low in the market-place, and there explained to them the subject of the late conferences at Sluys, and what the king of England had required of them at the advice and through the information of Jacob Von Artaveld. The whole assembly began to murmur

against him, and this request was received unfavourably by all. They said, 'That, if it pleased God, they never would be pointed out or found so disloyal as to disinherit their natural lord in favour of a stranger.' They then left the market-place much discontented and angry with Artaveld.

"Now see how unfortunately it fell out; for if he had gone to Ghent, instead of to Bruges and Ypres, and had remonstrated with them upon the quarrel of the king of England, they would all have consented to his wishes, as those of the two above-mentioned places had done; but he trusted so much to his prosperity and greatness, that he thought he could recover everything back in a little time.

"When, on his return, he came to Ghent about mid-day, the townsmen, who were informed of the time he was expected, had assembled in the street he was to pass through: as soon as they saw him, they began to murmur, and put their heads close together, saying, 'Here comes our leader, who is too much the master, and wants to order in Flanders according to his will and pleasure, which must not be longer borne.' With this they had also spread a rumour through the town, that Jacob Von Artaveld had collected all the revenues of Flanders for nine years and more; that he had usurped the government without rendering an account, for he did not allow any of the rents to pass to the earl of Flanders, but kept them securely to maintain his own state, and had, during the time above-

mentioned, received all fines and forfeitures; of this great treasure he had sent part into England. This information inflamed those of Ghent with rage, and, as he was riding up the streets, he perceived there was something in agitation against him; for those who were wont to salute him very respectfully, now turned their backs and went into their houses. He began, therefore, to suspect that all was not as usual; and, as soon as he had dismounted and entered his hotel, he ordered the doors and windows to be shut and fastened.

"Scarcely had his servants done this, when the street he inhabited was filled from one end to the other with all sorts of people, but especially by the lowest of the mechanics. His mansion was surrounded on every side, attacked and broken into by force. Those within did all they could to defend it, and killed and wounded many; but at last they could not hold out against such vigorous attacks, for three parts of the town were there. When Jacob Von Artaveld saw what efforts were making, and how hardly he was pushed, he came to a window, and, with his head uncovered, began to use humble and fine language, saying, 'My good people, what aileth you? why are you so enraged against me? by what means can I have incurred your displeasure? Tell me, and I will conform myself entirely to your wills.' Those who heard him made answer as with one voice, 'We want to have an account of the great treasures you have made

away with, without any title of reason.' Artaveld replied in a soft tone, 'Gentlemen, be assured I have never taken anything from the treasures of Flanders, and if you will return quietly to your homes, and come here to-morrow morning, I will be provided to give so good an account of them that you must reasonably be satisfied.' But they cried out, 'No, no! we must have it directly; you shall not thus escape from us, for we know that you have emptied the treasury, and sent it into England without our knowledge; you therefore shall suffer death.' When he heard this, he clasped his hands together, began to weep bitterly, and said, 'Gentlemen, such as I am you yourselves have made me: you formerly swore you would protect me against all the world; and now, without any reason, you want to murder me. You are certainly masters to do it if you please, for I am but one man against you all. Think better of it: for the love of God recollect former times, and consider how many favours and kindnesses I have conferred upon you! You wish to give me a sorry recompense for all the generous deeds you have experienced at my hands. You are not ignorant, that, when commerce was dead in this country, it was I who restored it. I afterwards governed you in so peaceable a manner, that under my administration you had all things according to your wishes,—corn, oats, riches, and all sorts of merchandize, which have made you so wealthy.' They began to bawl out, 'Come down,

and do not preach to us from such a height; for we will have an account and statement of the great treasures of Flanders, which you have governed too long without rendering any account; and it is not proper for an officer to receive the rents of a lord, or of a country, without accounting for them.' When Jacob Von Artaveld saw that he could not appease or calm them, he shut the window, and intended getting out of the house the back way to take shelter in a church adjoining; but his hotel was already broke into on that side, and upwards of four hundred were there calling out for him. At last he was seized by them, and slain without mercy; his death-stroke was given him by a sadler named Thomas Denys. In this manner did Jacob Von Artaveld end his days, who in his time had been complete master of Flanders. Poor men first raised him, and wicked men slew him. News of this event was soon spread abroad. Some pitied him, whilst others rejoiced at it. The earl Louis had remained all this time in Dendremonde, and with much pleasure heard of Jacob Von Artaveld's death, as he had very much opposed him in all his undertakings; nevertheless, he durst not yet place confidence in those of Flanders, nor return to Ghent."*

It appears that the principal agents in this insurrection were the weavers, who had been studiously taught that Artaveld meditated depriving them of their exclusive privileges: the duke of

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 142—4.

Brabant, who wished to marry his daughter to the son of the earl of Flanders, was also suspected of instigating the popular tumult. It was a fatal blow, from whatever quarter it came. Edward immediately returned to England, completely alienated from the Flemings; most of the great towns protested against the conduct of the citizens of Ghent, and disunion was fatally introduced into the commercial confederacy. Some of the leaders in Bruges and Ypres, however, believed that a remedy might be found, and they therefore proposed a marriage between Edward's daughter and the young heir to the earldom of Flanders. Edward was aware that nothing could be gained by a quarrel; he acquiesced in the excuses which were offered, but confidence between the allies was never perfectly restored.

Louis I., earl of Flanders, was one of the many French nobles who fell in the battle of Crecy: his son, Louis de Mâle, who was a youth of about sixteen, accepted the invitation of the Flemings to return to his hereditary states; he was received in all the cities with great rejoicings, and magnificent presents were made to him by the wealthy merchants and manufacturers. The earls of Northampton and Arundel, who were the English ambassadors in Flanders, suspected the French attachments of young Louis: they therefore induced the principal burghers to represent to him in strong terms, that as the prosperity of his subjects depended on

the woollen manufacture, so it was of the highest importance to preserve friendship with England, from whence they obtained the raw material; and that, as a pledge for peace, he should take Edward's daughter as his countess. Louis II. replied, with great indignation, that he never would unite himself to the daughter of the person who had slain his father. The quarrel between the young earl and his subjects soon became very warm; and the latter, who regarded the French as the bitter enemies of their rights, perceiving their ruler determined to support the cause of Philip, resolved to place him under restraint, or, in the phrase of the age, "to detain him in honourable captivity." We must have recourse to Froissart for an account of the artifice by which Louis effected his deliverance.

"The earl of Flanders was for a long time in danger from the Flemings, and, being a prisoner, was perfectly weary of it. He therefore made them understand that he was willing to follow their advice, for he could receive more advantages from them than from those in any other country. These words pleased the Flemings much: they gave him his liberty, and allowed him to partake of one of his favourite amusements—hawking, of which he was very fond. However, when he went to follow this sport, they set a good watch over him, that he did not escape, nor was stolen, from those who had undertaken to guard him on pain of death. These guards were of the king of England's party,

and watched him so closely that they would scarcely allow him any privacy. This conduct lasted so long, and was so offensive to the earl, that he agreed to marry the king of England's daughter. The Flemings immediately informed the king of it; and desired that the king and queen would come to the monastery at Bergues, accompanied by their daughter, and they would bring their earl there, and conclude the marriage.

"You may easily imagine how pleased the king and queen were with this news; they said the Flemings were very good sort of people. A day was fixed on for all parties to be at Bergues St. Vinox, between Newport and Gravelines. The most powerful and leading men of the different towns of Flanders came hither in great pomp, bringing their lord with them. He respectfully saluted the king and queen, who were there in great state. The king took the earl gently by the hand, led him forth, and said, to excuse himself as being the cause of the death of his father, that, as God should help him, he had never heard on the day of the battle of Creey, nor on the morrow, that the earl had been there. The young earl appeared to be satisfied with this excuse. The subject of the marriage was next discussed; and certain articles and treaties were agreed upon between the king and earl and the state of Flanders, which were promised and sworn to be adhered to. The earl was then betrothed to the lady Isabella, daughter of the king

and queen of England, whom he engaged to espouse; but the day of marriage was put off until the king should have more leisure. The Flemings returned home, taking with them their lord; and they quitted the king, queen, and the council in very good humour. The king went back to the siege of Calais. Things remained in this state, whilst the king was making preparations for rich presents of cloths and jewels to distribute on the wedding day. The queen was employed in the same manner, as she was anxious to acquit herself on the occasion with honour and generosity.

"The earl of Flanders, who was returned to his own country and among his own people, was continually hawking, and pretended that this English alliance was perfectly agreeable to him. The Flemings believed all he said, and did not keep so strict a guard upon him as before; but they were not then acquainted with the disposition of their lord, for, however much he might dissemble in his outward behaviour, he was in his heart devoted to the French. It happened one day, in the same week that he was to espouse the English princess, he went out a hawking: the falconer flied his hawk at a heron, and the earl did the same with his; the two hawks pursued their game, and the earl galloped off, as if following them, crying 'Hoye! hoye!' When he was at some distance from his keepers, and in the open fields, he struck spurs into his horse, and made such speed that he was soon out

of sight: he did not stop until he was got into Artois, where he was safe. He then went to king Philip in France, and related to him and his nobles his adventures, who told him he had acted wisely; but the English, on the contrary, accused him of betraying and deceiving them. The king of England, nevertheless, did not fail for this to cultivate the friendship of the Flemings; for he "knew that what had happened was not through their consent, but, on the contrary, they were very much enraged at it: so, he was immediately satisfied with the excuses they made on the occasion." *

Since the death of Artaveld, no popular leader had appeared in Flanders possessing sufficient influence to direct the government: the spirit of monopoly had gone far to extinguish patriotism; and the exclusive privileges claimed by Ghent, Ypres, and Bruges had alienated the rest of the country from these great manufacturing cities. The landed aristocracy soon perceived that the tide of public opinion was fast turning against the mercantile interests: they privately sent delegates to the court of France, to inform earl Louis of the change, and to request his immediate return. Philip, who desired much to bring the Flemings over to his interests, eagerly urged compliance; and recommended the earl to visit Bruges immediately, and to grant it such privileges as would induce the citizens to separate themselves from Ghent and Ypres. Louis

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 180.

followed the insidious advice: Bruges withdrew from the association of the free cities; a profitless monopoly was the reward of its treachery. Ghent and Ypres were, however, likely to be supported by England; and the earl was under the necessity of consenting to negotiations. A congress was opened at Dunkirk; where, on the 10th of December, 1348, a treaty for the pacification of Flanders was signed under the mediation of the duke of Lancaster, the nephew of Edward III. Earl Louis granted pardon to his Flemish subjects for all their former revolts, engaged to respect all their privileges, and confirmed the several treaties which they had made with the English. But pardons and privileges granted by princes, when not secured by constitutional guarantees, have rarely protected those who have attempted to encroach on their prerogatives. Soon after his return to Ghent, Louis took advantage of the rivalry between the trading companies to set one party against the other: the fullers and the inferior artisans took up arms against the weavers, who had been the chief of the earl's opponents, but who had sacrificed the respect due to the supporters of freedom by the devotedness which they exhibited for the maintenance of their selfish monopoly. A battle took place in the public streets: six hundred of the weavers were killed in the market-place; their comrades were pursued by the infuriate populace, and slaughtered in their own houses. Earl Louis took advan-

tage of the confusion to seize upon the most no-
noxious of the leaders of the former tumults in the
principal cities: in the confusion of popular strife
and clashing interests, their fate excited little at-
tention; most of them perished on the wheel or
the scaffold.

Froissart is almost the only historian who men-
tions that this counter-revolution ultimately led
to a brief war between the English and Flemings.
His characteristic notice of the contest must not
be omitted.

"The English and Flemings were not at this time on good terms, but attacked each other whenever they met on the seas; and so much had the Flemings lost that they were exceedingly angry. By accident, a fleet of each nation met off the island of Bas, in Brittany. The commander of the Flemings was John Peterson; and of the English, Sir Guy Brian. As soon as they saw each other, they prepared for action; which was immediately begun, and very sharp it was.

"The king's knights, who accompanied the earl of Hereford, Sir Richard Sturey, Sir Thomas Vuisque, and others, were in this engagement.

"These knights and their men fought very valiantly against the Flemings, and exerted themselves the more, because the enemy were in greater numbers, and were better prepared for action, as during the whole summer they had been wishing to meet the English. However, this time they

did not gain much by the meeting. The sea-fight lasted full three hours: many gallant acts were performed, and many were killed and wounded by the arrows. The ships were grappled together with chains and hooks, so that they could not escape.

"In the end the victory remained with the English; for the Flemings were discomfited, and John Peterson, their captain, made prisoner: the rest were either taken or slain, for none escaped. The English made sail for England with their prizes and prisoners, which prevented them from continuing their voyage to Brittany.

"The king was much rejoiced at the success of this engagement and defeat of the Flemings, especially when he learnt that they were the aggressors. John Peterson and his captains were put into close confinement, and the others dispersed in various parts of England.

"After this defeat off the isle of Bas, the king of England ordered a large armament to be prepared against the Flemings, to engage the enemy wherever they should meet with them, and to blockade their ports, so that no vessel could sail from them without risk of being taken. When the citizens of Bruges, Ypres, and Ghent heard of these orders, they summoned a council, and, after mature deliberation, resolved that it was not for their advantage to be at war, or to have any ill-will with the English, who were their neigh-

bours, and connected with them by commerce, on account of any quarrel of their earl; nor would it be expedient for them to aid and support him.

"The principal towns, therefore, dissembled, but sent able and good men to negotiate with the king of England and his council; who managed the affair so well, that on their return they brought peace to the country of Flanders, and to the Flemings, conformably to certain articles in the treaty which were sealed by each party. Thus was this business settled on a good and solid foundation."*

This is a very remarkable instance of the peaceful influence of commerce established on sound principles: the trade between England and Flanders was perfectly free; each nation found valuable customers in the other; the wool-grower of England was interested in the prosperity of his best customer, the master-manufacturer of Bruges or Ghent; and the Flemish manufacturer was not less interested in living on good terms with those who supplied him with the raw materials for his lucrative industry. Louis himself was probably impressed with the same feelings; for he not only remained at peace with England, but, in the reign of Charles V., seemed disposed to abandon the cause of France altogether, for he arrested an ambassador who had been sent from Paris to stimulate the Scots to invade England. We are indebted to Froissart for a knowledge of this cu-

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 465.

rious incident, which shall be narrated in his own words.

"The king of France, having well considered this matter, had various ideas on the subject, and, having fixed his plan, he called to him one of his knights, a prudent man, named Sir Peter, lord de Bournezel, and said, 'You will carry this message to Scotland, and salute the king and barons, with the assurance that we and our realm are willing to enter into treaties with them on the footing of good friends, in order that, when the season shall be favourable, we may send over troops, to be there admitted, in the like manner as the practice has been with our predecessors in former times; and in your journeys thither and back again, as well as during your residence, you will take care to keep such state as shall become an ambassador from the king, for such is our will; and every expense shall be repaid you.' The knight answered, 'Sire, your orders shall be obeyed.'

"He did not delay his journey long after this; but, when his preparations were ready, he took leave of the king, and set out from Paris, continuing his route until he came to Sluys, in Flanders.

"He waited there for a wind, which, being unfavourable, detained him fifteen days.

"During this time he lived magnificently, and gold and silver plate were in such profusion in the

apartments as if he had been a prince. He had also music to announce his dinner, and caused to be carried before him a sword in a scabbard, richly blazoned with his arms in gold and silver. His servants paid well for everything. Many of the towns-people were much astonished at the great state this knight lived in at home, which he also maintained when he went abroad. The bailiff of the town, who was an officer under the earl of Flanders, had noticed this conduct, and could not remain silent on the subject, for which he was to blame; but went and informed the earl of it, who at the time resided at Bruges, and his cousin the duke of Brittany with him. The earl of Flanders, having considered a while, with the advice of the duke of Brittany, ordered the ambassador to be brought thither. The bailiff returned to Sluys, and came very uncourteously to the king's knight; for he laid his hand on him, and arrested him in the name of the earl.

"The knight was exceedingly surprised at this proceeding; he told the bailiff that he was ambassador and commissioner from the king of France.

"The bailiff said, 'that might be; but he must speak with the earl, who had ordered him to be conducted into his presence.' The knight could not by any means excuse himself from being carried to Bruges with all his attendants. When he was brought into the apartments of the earl, he and the duke of Brittany were leaning on a

window which looked into the gardens. The knight cast himself on his knees before the earl, and said, 'My lord, I am your prisoner.' At which words the earl was mightily enraged, and replied with passion, 'How, rascal! do you dare to call yourself my prisoner, when I have only sent to speak to you? The subjects of my lord may very freely come and speak with me, but thou hast ill acquitted thyself by remaining so long at Sluys without coming to visit me when thou knewest I was so near; but I suppose thou disdainedst it.'—'My lord,' answered the knight, 'saving your displeasure—' He was interrupted by the duke of Brittany, who said, 'It is by such tattlers and jesters of the parliament of Paris, and of the king's chamber, as you, that the kingdom is governed, and you manage the king as you please, to do good or evil according to your wills; there is not a prince of the blood, however great he may be, if he incur your hatred, who will be listened to: but such fellows shall yet be hanged, until the gibbets be full of them.'

"The knight, who was still on his knees, was much mortified at these words; he saw that it was better for him to be silent than to make any reply; he did not therefore answer, but quitted the presence of the earl and his lords when he found an opportunity. Some worthy people, who were with the earl, made way for him, and carried

him to refresh himself. The knight afterwards mounted his horse and returned to his hotel in Sluys, where I will tell you what happened to him. Although all his stores were embarked, and there was a favourable wind for Scotland, he would not sail and risk the dangers of the sea; for he was warned that he was watched by the English who resided in Sluys, and that if he should sail he would be taken by the English and carried to England. Through fear of this happening, he gave up his intended voyage, quitted Sluys, and returned to the king at Paris.

"You may easily imagine that the lord de Bournezel was not long before he told the king all that had befallen him in Flanders; he related everything exactly as it had happened. It was necessary he should do so, by way of excusing himself for not having obeyed his orders; as the king was very much surprised at his return. When Sir Peter was relating the events of this journey, there were present several knights of the king's chamber, in particular Sir John de Guistelles of Hainault, a cousin to the earl of Flanders, who mutteringly repeated the words of Sir Peter; so that, thinking that the knight had spoken too freely of the earl of Flanders, he could not contain himself, but said, 'I cannot thus hear my dear cousin, the earl of Flanders, so slightingly spoken of; and if, sir knight, you mean to affirm for truth all you

have said, and assert that he, by his act, prevented you from fulfilling your orders, I challenge you to the field, and here is my glove.'

"The lord de Bournezel was not slow to reply. 'Sir John, I say that I was thus arrested and conducted by the bailiff of Sluys, and brought before the earl of Flanders, and that every word which I have spoken, as from that earl and the duke of Brittany, was said by them; and if you wish to say anything to the contrary, and that it was not so, I will take up your glove.'—'I do say so,' replied the lord de Guistelles. At these words the king looked very grave, and said, 'Come, come, we will hear no more of this.' He then retired into his closet, attended by his chamberlains, very well pleased that Sir Peter had so frankly spoken, and had so well answered Sir John de Guistelles. He said to them, smiling, 'He has kept his ground well; I would not for twenty thousand it had not so happened.' Sir John de Guistelles, who was one of the king's chamberlains, was afterwards so ill at court, and received with so much coldness, that he noticed it, and wished not to abide the consequences; he therefore took leave of the king, and went to Brabant to duke Winceslaus, who retained him in his service. With regard to the king of France, he was much angered with the earl of Flanders; for it appeared to several of the kingdom that he had prevented the lord de Bournezel from continuing his journey to Scotland.

"He had also entertained his cousin the duke of Brittany, who was greatly out of favour with the king of France. Those who were near the person of the king easily saw that the earl of Flanders was not in his good graces. Shortly after this event, the king of France wrote very sharp letters to his cousin the earl of Flanders, which contained also menaces, for that he had supported and kept with him the duke of Brittany whom he considered as his enemy. The earl wrote back again and made the best excuses he could. These were, however of no avail, for the king of France sent him sharper letters, in which he declared, that if he did not send away his enemy the duke of Brittany, he would look upon him in the same light. When the earl of Flanders saw the manner in which the king took it, and that he would follow it up, he considered with himself (for he had a quick imagination) and resolved to show these menaces to his principal towns, more especially to Ghent, to know what answer they would wish him to send. He dispatched copies to Bruges, Ypres, and Courtray; and he set out with the duke of Brittany for Ghent, where they were lodged at the postern gate. He was received by the citizens with very great joy, for at that time they were very much pleased to have him among them. When the deputies from the other towns were arrived according to their orders, the count had them assembled, and John de la Faucille harangued

them in his name on the cause of his meeting them; he read to them the letters which had been received within the last two months from the king of France. After these letters had been read, the earl spoke as follows: 'My children and good people of Flanders, through God's grace I have been for a long time your lord; I have governed you in peace as much as was in my power, and you have never seen anything in me but a desire to maintain you in prosperity, as a good lord should act in regard to his subjects. It must be very displeasing to me, and to you also who are my faithful subjects, that I should incur the hatred of my lord the king, because I keep with me my cousin-german, the duke of Brittany, who at this time is not in favour with the court of France; nor in truth can he place any dependence on his vassals of Brittany, through the hatred of five or six of his barons. The king insists that I banish him my house and territories, which would be very extraordinary. I do not say, but that, if I should assist my cousin in opposition to France, the king might have cause to complain; but I have neither done so, nor have I any such inclinations. It is for this cause I have assembled you, to explain to you the dangers that might happen if you should be desirous for him to remain with me.' They answered unanimously, 'My lord, we do wish him to remain with you; and we know not that prince, however great he may be,

who should resolve to make war upon you, but who would find in your earldom of Flanders two hundred thousand men completely armed.' "*

This devotedness to his interests, although it originated much more in hatred of the French than in love for the earl, was exceedingly grateful to Louis: he heartily thanked his subjects; they, on their part, displayed a warmer affection for his person than they had ever exhibited before. For a brief space, Flanders enjoyed an unusual degree of tranquillity and prosperity; but it was the delusive calm which precedes a tempest: a new struggle was fast approaching, which once more filled the land with tribulation and suffering.

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 564-6.

CHAPTER VII.

Insurrections of the Middle-Classes against Feudalism, continued. —Third Révolt of the cities of Flanders.—Evil influence of Trading Monopolies.—The White-hoods.

TOWARDS the close of the fourteenth century signs of awakening intelligence might be seen amongst the people in every nation of Europe; the Italian republics, the free cities of Germany, and the trading communities in the south of France, asserted the principle that governments were established for the general benefit, and that the utility of the protection which they conferred was the just limit of the allegiance which they had a right to claim. In England, the House of Commons, not dazzled by the military glories which had rendered the reign of Edward III. so illustrious, compelled the monarch to dismiss his mistress, and those ministers, who, towards the close of his reign, rendered the government oppressive to the people. The English nation applauded the efforts of their representatives; they designated the assembly which had manifested such a patriotic spirit "the good parliament," and re-elected nearly every one of its

members to the new parliament, which was summoned by the young king's guardians after the accession of Richard II.

Although Louis earl of Flanders had quarrelled with Charles V. of France, as has been already related, he could not divest himself of the feelings and prejudices of a French noble; he was not less convinced than his subjects that the triumph of the house of Valois would be fatal to municipal privileges, and the free institutions necessary to the prosperity of trading communities; but he was thoroughly imbued with the extravagant notions of feudal prerogative which he had inherited from his ancestors, and against these the prosperity of his subjects was but as mere dust in the balance. He was not contented with deriving the largest income of any sovereign in Europe from the industry of his subjects: at once rapacious and extravagant, he spent in idle shows and pompous spectacles immense sums, which he did not always find it easy to replace, particularly as he insisted on a strict adhesion to heraldic laws in his magnificent tournaments; thus excluding the merchants and manufacturers from those enjoyments which their wealth had purchased. In an earlier age of Flemish history the oppression and imposts of Louis II. would not have been endured, but the blighting influence of monopoly had now spread in every direction; every city, every incor-

porated trade, every chartered company, had no higher ambition than to purchase some exclusive privilege from the government; and thus selfish interests made each willing to maintain the prerogatives by which all equally suffered. In the year 1379 earl Louis had quite exhausted his wealth in a magnificent tournament given at the feast of Pentecost, and had every reason to fear that his subjects would not grant him a new subsidy. On former occasions he had evaded this difficulty by employing assassins to remove the most troublesome leaders of the opposition. Amid the anarchy which the pretensions of rival monopolies had introduced, it would have been difficult to find a man in Flanders who had not a death-feud with one or more of his neighbours, and who would not be ready to remove a rival in trade by his dagger, if insured of impunity for the murder. John Hyons, one of the most wealthy burgesses in Ghent, had been on more than one occasion induced to become the agent in executing the earl's personal vengeance, until at length he murdered a member of rank in the municipality, and was expelled from Ghent. Earl Louis granted Hyons a free pardon, and recalled him from Doway, where he had sought shelter. The assassin returned to Ghent, fully persuaded that he had established a claim on the earl's gratitude sufficiently strong to ensure his future security.

Hyons was soon doomed to experience personally what the trading communities of Flanders had begun to discover collectively, that it was an evil fate which induced them to abandon their own order, and look for profits from the capricious grants of power, and not from their own individual exertions. John Hyons and his family had rivals, who equally opposed their influence in the city, and the supremacy of their house in trade: at the head of these were Matthew Ghisbert and his six brothers, men of great energy, spirit, and enterprise, who had often engaged in bloody strife with the family of Hyons. Ghisbert, instead of renewing such violence when his rival was recalled from exile, resolved, if possible, to supplant him in the earl's favour: the means were sufficiently obvious; all he had to do was to offer higher bribes. The seven brothers addressed themselves to the earl's chamberlain, offering by their influence to obtain for him the grant of a heavy toll on the navigation of the Lys and Scheldt, to the amount of seven thousand florins annually. Louis at once accepted the proposal; he deprived Hyons of the office of superintendent of inland navigation, which he had formerly given him, and bestowed it on Michael Ghisbert. The opposition which Hyons made to the obnoxious toll restored to him a portion of the popularity which his former subserviency to the earl had destroyed; but such a change had come

over the old public and noble spirit of the Flemings, that his complete restoration to power was owing infinitely more to his support of a monopoly than to his patriotism and resistance of taxation.

The citizens of Bruges had not the same advantages of inland navigation as those of Ghent: they offered earl Louis a large sum for permission to connect their canal by a cross cut with the river Lys; and Louis, ever ready to favour those who offered him money, readily granted them permission. It does not appear that this new canal would have caused any positive injury to the city of Ghent, but it would most assuredly have benefited their rival manufacturers in Bruges; and this was quite sufficient to excite all the angry passions, which had been growing with increasing strength ever since the honourable principles of free trade and equal rights had been abandoned for those of vested interests and monopolies. The citizens of Bruges, aware of the hostility which this boon to their commerce would create, made haste to render it available without delay. They hastily collected large bodies of excavators, hoping to have the work completed before the citizens of Ghent would have time to organize a resistance. But Fame with her thousand tongues had brought intelligence of the commencement of the work to Ghent. On all sides nothing was heard but exclamations against the ruin with which their commerce was menaced by the new canal. In some of the former troubles

an association had been formed by some of the more violent citizens of Ghent to maintain civic privileges; its members received the name of the White-hoods, from wearing these as a distinguishing cognizance: Hyons revived this association; five hundred daring volunteers enrolled themselves on the first day, and their earliest exploit was to march against the excavators employed in cutting the Bruges canal, whom they dispersed with great violence.

Roger d'Outerive,* whom the earl had appointed his deputy in Ghent, was a leading member of the landed aristocracy, full of all the prejudices of his class, unacquainted with the concerns of commerce, and knowing nothing more of municipal privi-

* Mr. Lenz, professor in the University of Ghent, has recently thrown great light on the revolt of the White-hoods and other disturbances in Flanders, by the publication of his researches into the municipal archives. Froissart, the principal authority followed by most modern historians, obtained his information from men of his own class, that is, from zealous partisans of the aristocratic faction: the merchants of Flanders were heedless of the influence of literature, and did not, therefore, take any measures to have a fair statement of their case laid before their contemporaries, or preserved for posterity. We shall follow Froissart in those parts of his narrative where his information was most likely to be accurate, and where his unrivalled powers of graphic delineation bring the whole scene before the eyes of his reader with all the effect of a vivid painting. But we shall, on the other hand, refer to the archives collected by Lenz for the motives which influenced the citizens to resist the authority of their government. Outerive's character, in the text, is taken from Lenz, who has quoted indisputable authority for every trait.

leges than that they were very disagreeable restrictions on the authority delegated to him by the earl. From the very moment of his installation he lost no opportunity of evincing his contempt for the burgesses and their rights; it was a favourite jest with him to repeat that he would soon be out of rope, as he intended to hang every troublesome citizen of Ghent before his own door. In violation of the municipal constitution, he arrested one of the free burgesses, refused to take bail, and sent him to prison. The partisans of Hyons made loud complaints. "This proceeding," said they, "is a direct violation of our privileges; if we submit to it, our franchises will be broken up little by little, which, in former times, were so noble, and prized so high, that the most illustrious knights deemed it an honour to be admitted to the freedom of the city of Ghent, and so well guarded that even the kings of France were forced to respect them." The civic magistrates sent to demand the liberation of the prisoner, who was one of the most wealthy and respectable manufacturers in Ghent; but the earl's lieutenant haughtily replied, "Fine speeches truly are these for mechanics and tradesmen! He should be ten times more rich, and ten times more influential, whom I would liberate from prison without the consent of my master, the earl of Flanders."

John Hyons was rejoiced at the insane policy of

the earl's lieutenant, which he foresaw would greatly extend his own influence over the multitude. He collected an assembly of the people, and addressed them in a speech of great temper and moderation, qualities which his enemies subsequently declared to be affected; but it is probable that he hoped the earl would have had sufficient prudence to disavow the act of his deputy, especially as it was not likely to bring him any pecuniary profit. "I am of opinion," said Hyons, "that we should do nothing to lessen the heritage of our lord, the earl of Flanders, or the immunities thereunto belonging; such a course would be inconsistent with justice and reason. Neither should we do anything likely to provoke his wrath, for it is of great importance to our interests that we should be on good terms with our liege lord. The earl of Flanders is a right noble prince, illustrious and valiant, who has for many years watched over the peace and prosperity of us and ours. We ought, therefore, to be grateful, and exhibit more patience towards him than we would if he had harassed us with continual wars. But he is at present badly counselled against us, and against the privileges of the good city of Ghent. We must, therefore, depute to him some of our wisest and gravest citizens, who will fully explain to him our grievances, and inform him that he and his ministers are mistaken if they suppose that we are not

able and willing to defend our privileges by force of arms, if driven to the hard necessity." *— "It is well spoken! it is well spoken!" responded the crowd unanimously. Deputies were sent to the earl, who was then at the castle of Mâle, from which he derived his name, Louis of Mâle, by which he is best known in history. He received them very kindly, and offered to concede all their demands, provided that the confraternity of the White-hoods were dissolved.

When this answer was brought back to Ghent, Hyons again convoked an assembly of the people, and thus addressed them, "Fellow-citizens, you are aware that the White-hoods have proved better guardians of your privileges than hoods of scarlet:† the White-hoods have caused themselves to be feared and respected; and, if our lord's ordinance commanding them to be dissolved should be executed, I would not give three farthings for your boasted privileges." Again the multitude responded, "It is well spoken! Hyons gives us sound advice." The earl, finding that his commands were

* See M. de Barante, Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne, vol. i. chap. i.—This able and interesting historian has preserved the racy simplicity of the old chronicles, without abandoning the spirit of philosophical inquiry and calm reflection necessary to render history a collection of instructive precedents. It appears, however, that some of the old writers believed the praise which Hyons bestowed on the earl to be ironical. Barante receives it as serious.

† Scarlet hoods were worn by the municipal officers.

disobeyed, resolved to have recourse to force; Outerive received orders to assemble a force of three hundred horse, enter Ghent, and take Hyons dead or alive. Information of his danger was conveyed to the demagogue, who stood upon his guard. When Outerive and his knights entered Ghent, they found the White-hoods drawn up in the market-place; a command to disperse was received with hootings, and the lieutenant ordered the cavalry to charge. The White-hoods stood firm: the knights were entangled among the stalls, carts, and waggons around; they were soon defeated with great loss; Roger d'Outerive was pulled from his horse and trampled to death; the earl's banner, which he displayed, was wrested from his hand and contumeliously torn in pieces. The houses of those citizens attached to the party of the earl and the nobles were attacked and pillaged; but Ghisbert, and some other personal enemies of Hyons, saved themselves by hasty flight.

The White-hoods were now masters of the city of Ghent, and no one dared to oppose them. But when the revolters began to reflect on the consequences of their rashness, and to listen to the remonstrances of their magistrates, they felt some alarm at the consequences, and joined the municipal council in sending a new deputation to the castle of Mâle, in order to deprecate the wrath of earl Louis. Hyons and his friends opposed the measure; but, finding themselves in a minority, they

consented to the delegation on condition of the deputies rejecting any amnesty which did not grant a universal pardon. The earl was very reluctant to yield to such a demand, but at length was induced to consent; before, however, the deputies returned home, new acts of violence had been perpetrated, which rendered their negotiations fruitless.

John Hyons collected the White-hoods to the number of ten thousand; he informed them that the earl had collected vast quantities of provisions and military stores in his castle of Wondelghem,* a beautiful structure recently erected on the road between Ghent and Bruges. A proposal to attack the castle was received with acclamation; they marched out, and, finding the place defenceless, pillaged its rich contents, including the earl's wardrobe. "John Hyons affected to be in a violent passion at this conduct, but it was not so in reality, as it afterwards appeared; for, after they had left the castle and marched into the plain, on looking behind them they saw the castle in flames in twenty places, and, if they had entertained the inclination, it was not in their power to extinguish it." John Hyons, who pretended to be much surprised, cried out, "How has this fire happened in my lord's house?" They answered, "By accident!"—"Well," replied he, "it cannot now be helped; and it is still better that accident should

* It is erroneously called "Ardeghem" both by Froissart and Barante.

have burned it than that we should. Everything considered, it was but a dangerous neighbour; and my lord might have established a garrison therein which would have annoyed us much." They all answered, "What you say is true."*

When intelligence of this outrage was brought to earl Louis, he summoned back the twelve deputies from Ghent to his presence, and addressed them in terms of great indignation: "Wretches!" said he, "you supplicate my favour sword in hand. I had acceded to every proposal you had made, according to your wish; and your people have set fire to and burned the house which I loved in preference to all my others. Do you not think there had been sufficient contempt shown me when they murdered my bailiff while he was executing my orders, tore my banner and trod it under foot? Know, that if my own honour were not concerned, and if you had not already obtained passports from me, I would now have you all beheaded. Quit my presence, and tell those wicked and outrageous men of Ghent, that they shall never have peace, nor will I listen to any negotiations, until I shall have given up to me all those whom I point out, and whom I will have beheaded without mercy."

War was now openly declared: the earl summoned all the knights of Flanders to meet him at Lille, where they renewed their oaths and fidelity, and pledged themselves enthusiastically to support

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 584.

his cause; they were sent to garrison the towns which adhered to Louis, together with some German auxiliaries obtained from the princes of Germany. On the other hand, the principal cities of Flanders, without inquiring very minutely into the origin of the war, felt convinced that their liberties would be endangered if Ghent was reduced to feudal servitude, and allied themselves with the insurgents. As the origin of the war was the preference which Louis manifested for Bruges, it was generally believed that the earl's party would greatly preponderate in that city; but, when John Hyons and a party from Ghent came before its walls, the commonalty at once opened the barriers and gates, a treaty of strict alliance was concluded between the two municipalities, and in a few days the town of Damme similarly acceded to the confederacy.

In the midst of his victorious career John Hyons was taken sick and died rather suddenly, under circumstances which gave rise to a strong suspicion of poison. His death was generally lamented throughout Flanders, but the insurgents were not daunted by his loss. The deacons of the several trades united with the municipal authorities and the military officers to elect four commanders; the persons chosen were John Pruneel,* John Boule, Rasse de Harzelle, and Peter du Bois, all men

* The name in Froissart is "Pruniaux;" but, like all French writers, he denationalizes the name of every foreign person and place mentioned in his history.

of approved conduct and valour. The first enterprize of the new generals was to compel Ypres and the cities included in the liberties of Bruges to accede to the confederacy. A division of the knights attached to Louis occupied Ypres and refused admission to the army of Ghent; but the artisans and operatives of Ypres demanded that admission should be given to their brethren, and, when this was refused, they attacked the cavaliers in the rear, while the men of Ghent pressed forward in front: several of the knights were slain, and the rest escaped with great difficulty.

Ypres was an important acquisition to the insurgents; its loss was severely felt by the earl, but he hoped to check the progress of the revolt by obstinately defending Oudenarde, without which his adversaries could not command the navigation of the Scheldt. All the nobles of Flanders and the knights attached to the earl hastened to the defence of this important position with the greater alacrity, because they knew that the inhabitants of the town were disposed to favour the revolters. On the other hand, the Flemings raised an army of sixty thousand men to besiege the place; their wealth enabled them to procure an abundant supply of all the munitions of war, and it is particularly mentioned that they had a fine train of artillery, which now began to be used for the attack as well as the defence of fortified places. The siege was vigorously pressed, and the defence was equally

obstinate; the engines of ancient and modern war were simultaneously employed against the walls of Oudenarde: it was at the same time assailed by armed boats from the river; and its garrison, accustomed only to serve as cavalry in the open field, began to suffer very severely. Louis, with a small corps of observation, was posted at Terminde, in a position which enabled him sometimes to annoy the besiegers; a detachment of the Flemings made an attempt to surprise his camp, but the secret of their expedition was betrayed, and they were routed with some loss.

Oudenarde was not rescued by this trifling victory; earl Louis found it impossible to interrupt the siege, and therefore began to lend an ear to pacific counsels. His mother, Margaret of Artois, applied to the duke of Burgundy to interpose his good offices as mediator; and that prince came to meet her at Arras, accompanied by his councillors and several of his nobles. The reigning duke of Burgundy was Philip the Hardy, the first of the princes of Valois who reigned over that province, and the most illustrious prince whom that family had yet produced. At the battle of Poictiers, when his father, king John of France, deserted by his nobles and the princes of his blood, was made prisoner by the English, Philip remained fighting by his side to the very last moment: he shared his father's captivity in England, and he diligently exerted himself to fulfil the engagements which the royal prisoner made with Ed-

ward the Black Prince as the price of his deliverance. John, to reward the fidelity of the only one of his children who had shown qualities worthy of the royal race, bequeathed him the duchy of Burgundy, which had lapsed to the crown. Philip proved himself worthy of such favour; for under his administration the duchy of Burgundy, in wealth, prosperity, and political influence, became more than a rival for the kingdom of France itself. The duke opened negotiations with the Flemings: he showed them the vast injury which the continued war wrought to their trade and commerce; he found the merchants not insensible to these representations, but at the same time disinclined to repose any confidence in the promises of their rulers without some guarantee for their execution. They particularly insisted on the demolition of the fortifications of Oudenarde, averring with truth that the town could not hold out much longer, and that therefore they ought not to be prejudiced in their enterprize by consenting to accept of his mediation. Philip sent one of his generals to investigate the condition of the garrison; he found the knights nearly destitute, but still resolved to hold out against the men of Ghent: "Tell your master," they said, "not to consent to any disadvantageous terms for our sake: thank God, we are well able to defend ourselves." The duke continued to negotiate: he promised an amnesty for the past, without any reserve or exception; he declared that the earl of Flan-

ders would for the future reside in his good city of Ghent, and become the protector of the privileges of his subjects. Earl Louis was very reluctant to accede to these stipulations; but the influence of his mother, the authority of the duke, the advice of his best councillors, and the urgent solicitations of the citizens of Bruges finally prevailed: he consented to the preliminaries of a treaty, but not until he was thoroughly convinced that there was no other mode of rescuing his partisans who were blockaded in Oudenarde. John Pruneel, who had in some degree succeeded to the same station and influence which Hyons had previously held, came to visit the earl in Tournay: he was received with extraordinary honours; feasts were given and tournaments held to celebrate the reconciliation, and the peace was signed amid general rejoicings.

Louis was far from forgetting or forgiving the various mortifications he had received from his subjects: he refused to make Ghent his residence, as had been promised, but remained obstinately in Bruges. This determination greatly afflicted the partisans of peace in Ghent, and threw the whole weight of political influence into the hands of the factious White-hoods. At length the citizens sent deputies to Bruges, forbidding them to return without the earl, as the gates of the city would be closed against them. The deputies found Louis attended by his knights, on the road between

Bruges and Deynse: they respectfully formed two lines, through which he rode without paying much attention to their salutations; after which they fell into his train, and accompanied him to Deynse. Some delay occurred before an audience was granted; at length the deputies were admitted to the earl's presence, when they threw themselves on their knees before him, and humbly entreated him to come and reside in Ghent, as his presence could alone restrain the spirit of the factious. "I well believe," replied the earl with cutting calmness, "that there are persons in Ghent who desire my presence, but I am astonished that they have not a more perfect recollection of past events. I have been always favourable towards them, and disposed to grant their requests; I have banished from the land those gentlemen who violated their rights and privileges; I have too often opened my prisons to surrender their burgesses and mine when they required it; I have loved and honoured them more than all others in my earldom. They, on the contrary, have murdered my deputy, pillaged the houses of my adherents, destroyed the castle which I loved best in the world, and injured me so severely that I could not banish the recollection of such wrongs, even if I desired it." Had any of the democratic party been present, the earl might have heard recriminatory charges which would have formed a longer and a blacker catalogue of offences; but the deputies were chosen from his own adherents, who

were not less opposed to the violence of the White-hoods than he was himself, and who were anxious on any terms to bring him back to Ghent, that by his countenance and support they might triumph over the adverse faction. They therefore humbly replied, "Your lordship has promised a full amnesty, and the past should therefore be buried in oblivion!"—"True," replied the earl: "I do not wish you to infer from my words that I intend to menace you with any future evils; I only wish you to bear in mind the cruelties and outrages perpetrated by the men of Ghent." He then treated them with more cordiality, and ordered wine to be served for their refreshment.

On the following day the duke made his public entry into Ghent: the citizens received him with magnificent processions and joyous acclamations; but he scarcely noticed their homage, and rode through the city without returning a single salute. When the municipal magistrates waited upon him, he informed them that he deemed two things necessary to the maintenance of peace and tranquillity,—the dissolution of the confraternity of the White-hoods, and the punishment of those who had murdered his deputy. "We equally desire these things," replied the magistrates, "but have not the power to obtain them: the people, however, are so rejoiced at your return, that you are likely to influence them more effectually than we could; come to-morrow into the market-place, speak

to them yourself, and they will grant you whatever you desire."

Intelligence of what had passed at this interview soon spread through the city; the captains of the White-hoods secretly mustered their companies, enjoining them to appear well-armed in the market-place on the following day, with the ensigns of the confraternity displayed, and to remain perfectly tranquil unless they should be attacked. On the following morning the earl rode to the market-place, accompanied by his choicest knights, the chief magistrates of the city, and the most wealthy of the burgesses. His temper was a little ruffled when he saw such a multitude of White-hoods assembled; but, suppressing his passion, he ascended a balcony decorated with scarlet drapery, and addressed the assembly in a conciliatory tone. He spoke of the favours he had formerly shown the citizens of Ghent; he dwelt very strongly on the duties of subjects to love, honour, and obey their liege lords, a duty which he delicately insinuated was not always fulfilled by those whom he addressed. He spoke at large of the rapid improvement of commerce and manufactures under his reign, which he of course attributed to the wisdom of his paternal government; adding, that he had thrown open to them several lines of communication which had been closed in preceding reigns. He was heard in respectful silence for more than an hour; but when, in conclusion, he declared that the

dissolution of the confraternity of the White-hoods was necessary to a perfect reconciliation between him and his subjects, murmurs arose from the crowd, and no applause followed the conclusion of his harangue. The noble orator was greatly mortified when he found that his speech had not produced the intended effect: he ordered the assembly to disperse, and every man to return to his own home. A few of the burgesses obeyed, but the White-hoods stood as motionless as statues. There was a look of sternness and dogged resolution in these men which daunted the earl, and prevented him from making any attempt to disperse them by force. He passed through the midst of them without receiving or giving the slightest salutation: he returned to his hotel, and said to his favourites, "There is no managing these White-hoods, they are such obstinate wretches; I see that matters cannot rest where they are, but I will hazard everything rather than submit to such insolence." In a few days after, he secretly quitted Ghent: the White-hoods immediately resumed their ascendancy: they began to make preparations for a renewal of the war; and the count's former partisans joined in their projects, partly offended by his secret departure, but principally because they were persuaded that the count was really the inveterate enemy of their municipal and commercial franchises.

Charles V. of France believed it to be his duty

to investigate the causes of the war in Flanders, as the most contradictory accounts of it were brought to his court. He summoned earl Louis to Paris; but the earl, fearing that some inquiry might be made respecting the succour he had afforded to the king's enemy, the duke of Brittany, and the insult he had offered to the royal ambassador, mentioned in the preceding chapter, refused to obey. At length, his mother, Margaret, who was much respected by the king and princes of France, having offered to accompany him, Louis went to Paris, where Charles gave him a gracious reception and favourably received his excuses. The war in Flanders was discussed: Louis related the insults offered to his authority, and the restraints imposed on his prerogative, certain of obtaining the sympathy of an absolute monarch. Charles declared that this spirit of rebellion was clearly the result of too much freedom, wealth, and prosperity; he advised the earl to curtail their franchises and increase their burthens, promising that he would support him with an army as soon as tranquillity had been restored in his own kingdom.*

Having been thus strengthened by his reconciliation with the king of France, Louis returned to the frontiers of Flanders, and established himself at Lille. Outerive's relations, who were in the earl's household, had long sought an opportunity of revenging his death; they seized, by

* Barante, Hist. des Ducs de Bourgogne, lib. i.

chance, four barges belonging to Ghent, and, having plundered the merchandize on board, put out the eyes of the mariners, and sent them thus mutilated to the city. In revenge the White-hoods seized Oudenarde; but the chief citizens refused to sanction this violation of the late treaty, and sent Pruneel, who had been the chief instigator of the attack, into exile. But, though the treaty was nominally maintained, hostilities between the feudal lords of the country and the citizens raged from one end of Flanders to the other. Froissart has given us the following interesting narrative of this desultory war:

"Although there was peace in Flanders, the earl had constant suspicions of Ghent; for every day some tales were brought him respecting it, and similar ones were told of him to the townsmen of Ghent. John de Faucille went to reside at Nazareth, a very handsome and strong house of his, a good league distant from Ghent. He dissembled there as long as he was able, and would not be of the town council, in order to avoid being marked by the earl. He also absented himself very much from his attendance on the earl, to preserve his popularity at Ghent; and thus, as it were, swimming between two streams, kept himself as much neuter as he could.

"During the time the earl was repairing Oudenarde, and had just finished it, he was earnest, by letters and messages, to his cousin the duke

of Brabant to get possession of John Pruniaux (Pruneel) who resided at Ath. He managed the matter so well, that he was delivered up and brought to Lille, where he was beheaded and his body placed on a wheel as a traitor. Such was the end of John Pruniaux (Pruneel). At this time the earl came to Ypres, and held there several courts of justice, by whose judgments many wicked people were beheaded,—such as fullers and weavers, who had opened the gates to the men of Ghent, and slain the earl's knights,—that others might from them take warning. All this was told in Ghent, which made them more suspicious than before, especially the leaders of the expedition to Oudenarde.

"They said among themselves, 'Certainly the earl will, if he can, destroy all of us. He loves us so well, he only wants our lives. Has he not put to death John Pruniaux (Pruneel)? In truth, we must own we acted very wrong in regard to John Pruniaux (Pruneel), when we suffered him to be banished; we are guilty of his death, and, if they can catch us, such an end as his awaits us: let us be on our guard.'

"Peter du Bois added, 'If you will be advised by me, there shall not a gentleman's house of any strength remain in the country about Ghent; for by such houses we may all be destroyed, if we do not take care and provide a remedy.' The others answered, 'You say well; come quick, let

us down with them all!' Upon this the captains, Peter du Bois, John Boule, Rasse de Harzelle, John de 'Lannoy, and several others, made preparations for setting out from Ghent; which they did, and burnt and destroyed all the houses of the gentlemen: whatever they found therein, they divided among themselves as fair booty. After this, they returned to Ghent, and none were bold enough to say to them you have done ill.

"The gentlemen, knights, and squires, who resided at Lille with the earl, on hearing this, were much enraged, and with reason; they told the earl that this outrage ought to be punished, and the pride of the Ghent men humbled. The earl gave to these knights and squires permission to make war on Ghent, and revenge themselves for the injuries they had suffered. They made alliances with many knights and squires of Flanders, and entreated their friends in Hainault to assist them, and chose for their commander Le Hasle de Flandres, the eldest bastard son of the earl, a right valiant knight.

"This Hasle de Flandres and his companions sometimes fixed their quarters in Oudenarde; at others, at Gavres, Alost, or Dendremonde; and had frequent skirmishes with the Ghent men. They advanced up to the barriers of the town and destroyed almost all the windmills which were around it, committing other injuries on Ghent. They had with them a young knight from Hainault, well

inclined to serve them, whose name was Sir James de Verchin, seneschal of Hainault. He performed many gallant deeds, and adventured himself sometimes too rashly in tilting close to the barriers, and twice or thrice won from them their helmets and cross-bows. This Sir James de Verchin was very fond of arms, and would have greatly excelled if he had lived longer; but he died young, and in his bed, at the castle of Ombre, near Mortaigne, which was a great loss.

"The men of Ghent had been very free in their jokes and mockeries of the noblemen and gentry of Flanders, but were afterwards sorry for it, and had once intentions of sending to duke Albert of Hainault, to request he would recal his knights who were making war against them; but, on reconsidering the business, they thought it would only be lost labour, for the duke would not interfere in it. They were unwilling also to anger him more, for they should fare ill without his country; and, if Hainault, Holland, and Zealand were shut against them, they might consider themselves as ruined. They therefore gave up this, and followed other counsel; which was, to send to those knights and squires of Hainault who held possessions within Ghent or its dependency, to come and serve them, under pain of losing their estates. They, however, paid no attention to their summons. To this effect they sent to Sir Hervé, lord d'Antoing, who had an estate in Ghent, and was also constable

of the castle, to assist them, or he would lose the rights of his castlewick; and, because he would not obey their summons, they razed his house of Drenne to the ground.

"The lord d'Antoing sent them word he would cheerfully serve them at their expense, and to their ruin; that they were not to place any dependence on him, for he would always be their enemy, and oppose them in every instance; that he would not hold anything of them, but from his lord the earl of Flanders, to whom he owed duty and obedience. This lord kept well the promise he had made them; for he waged a mortal war against Ghent, and did them many injuries. He reinforced the castle with men and stores, by which means those in Ghent were much annoyed. On the other hand, the lord d'Enghien, whose name was Walter, though a young squire, but well inclined, did them much mischief. The war was thus sharply carried on during the whole season.

"The Ghent men dared not venture out of their town but in large troops; for wherever they met their enemies, if in superior numbers, they were all slain without mercy.

"Thus was the war embittered between the earl of Flanders and Ghent, which afterwards cost a hundred thousand lives twice told, and with great difficulty could any end be put to it, and peace re-established; for the leaders in Ghent knew they had done such evil deeds against the earl of Flan-

ders and the duke of Burgundy, that they were persuaded no treaty could be made or sworn to, whatever the outward appearance of it might be, but that their lives would be sacrificed. This made them firm in their resolutions, and resolved to keep up the division and war against the earl and gentlemen of Flanders: it also gave them the courage to fight desperately; which, however, sometimes ill-befel them in enterprizes, as you will hear related.

"The earl of Flanders, who had fixed his residence at Lille, received daily information of the ill-deeds of the men of Ghent, how they were destroying and burning the houses of his nobles: he was sore vexed, and said he would take so great a revenge on Ghent that he would put it in fire and flames, with all the inhabitants within it. In order to be more powerful, the earl summoned all the barons of Flanders, and gave up to them the whole country, the better to resist the White-hoods. He appointed two leaders,—Galois de Mamines and Peter d'Estrevilles. These two, with their company, bore the banner of the earl, and remained about three weeks between Oudenarde and Courtray, upon the Lys; where they did much damage When Rasse de Harzelle was informed of this, he marched out of Ghent, with the White-hoods, to Deynse, where he thought to meet the army of the earl; but, when they knew that the Ghent men were on their march, they retreated to Tournay, and strengthened the town. They continued there, and

in the neighbourhood of Damme, Orchies, and Vorlam, a considerable time; so that the merchants dared not go from Tournay to Douay for fear of them. It was reported the Ghent men intended besieging Lille, and the earl within it; and, for this purpose, they would have formed an alliance with Bruges and Ypres. They had gained over Grammont and Courtray, but those of Bruges and Ypres were irresolute.

"They had disagreed with the handicraft trades, declaring it would be a great folly to go so far to lay siege to Lille; for the earl, their lord, might form an alliance with the king of France, as he had formerly done, and receive from him much assistance.

"These doubts kept the principal towns of Flanders at this time from entering into the war, so that no siege was formed. To prevent the earl from entering into any treaty with his son-in-law the duke of Burgundy, they sent ambassadors with most amicable letters to the king of France, to supplicate him, for the love of God, not to take any part to their disadvantage, for their only wish was love, peace, obedience, and service; and that their lord had very wrongfully and wickedly oppressed and harassed them; that what they were now doing was only for the preservation of their franchises, which their lord wanted to destroy. The king was somewhat inclined in their favour, though he showed not any appearance of it in public. The duke

of Anjou, his brother, did the same; for, although the earl of Flanders was their cousin, he was not in their good graces, on account of having entertained the duke of Brittany for a long time, much against their wills. They therefore troubled not themselves about his affairs; neither did pope Clement, who said that God had sent him this rod because he was his enemy, and would not acknowledge him as pope." *

The death of Charles V. threw France into such confusion that the condition of Flanders excited little attention. Earl Louis, left to his own resources, was unable to conquer the insurgents, though the confederates were divided by their monopolies and vested interests, which, to the very last, seemed dearer to them than their common rights. If the selfishness of monopoly had not blinded them, the menacing aspect of affairs in France should have taught them that a change was taking place in that country which would have a fatal influence on the affairs of Flanders. The duke of Burgundy—closely connected with earl Louis by the ties of affinity—was about to become the regent of France, and to unite the royal forces to those of his own duchy. Against such a combination nothing but the most perfect union could have enabled the Flemings to make head; but, in addition to other causes of distraction, a distinction had been recently introduced between the higher and lower incorpo-

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 599—601.

rated trades:* "the small handicraft trades," says Froissart, "wished to act according to their own inclination, which the richer sort would not suffer. This caused a rebellion, and great numbers of the fullers and weavers lost their lives before the rest were appeased."

The democratic party in Bruges was still sufficiently powerful to create some alarm among the higher classes: they could not, without external aid, retain the victory which they had gained; and they applied to their earl to transfer his court from Lille to their city. Louis was not slow in obeying the summons; he came to Bruges escorted by a numerous body of the nobles, knights, and esquires of Flanders: the council received him with great joy, and its members vied with each other in professions of slavish submission to his will. All the leaders of the democratic associations, and those who were even suspected of sympathizing with the projects of the citizens of Ghent, were arrested and sent to prison: more than five hundred of them were in a short time beheaded. The Franconate, or district, included within the liberty of Bruges, comprised several important towns, all of which had been more or less injured by the zeal with which the citizens

* It is probable that this distinction may have existed from the beginning, but it produced no evil result until each incorporated company began to insist on certain exclusive commercial privileges. Monopoly was at the root of every calamity which overwhelmed the prosperous manufactures of Flanders.

of Ghent had maintained their claims to certain exclusive privileges of trade: they sent proffers of homage and aid to the earl, which he very gladly accepted; and thus, by the dissensions and jealousies of his adversaries, he recovered in a few weeks most of the prerogatives which had been wrested from his coronet in a protracted struggle of several years. Thus strengthened, Louis no longer deigned to temporize: he denounced the treaty he had formerly made with the insurgents,—which, in truth, had been observed by neither party,—and openly proclaimed his resolution to become absolute sovereign of Flanders.

CHAPTER VIII.

Insurrections of the Middle Classes against Feudalism, continued. —Philip Von Artaveld's brief career.—End of the war of the White-hoods.

Earl Louis was filled with the highest hopes of recovering his former supremacy by the defection of Bruges and its Franconate, or district associated with its privileges, from the confederacy of the free cities: he resolved to lose no time in taking advantage of so favourable an event; and his first enterprize was the recovery of Ypres, the citizens of which had given him mortal offence by opening their gates to the White-hoods of Ghent, and assisting in the slaughter of his knights. News was soon conveyed to Ypres of the impending danger; they determined to apply to Ghent for assistance, as they were not of themselves sufficient to defend the place. The men of Ghent immediately assented to their request; a force of nine thousand men was promptly prepared, and sent out under Rasse de Harzelle, Peter du Bois, and other eminent captains, in order to effect a junction with eight thousand men who had marched from Ypres to in-

tercept the earl's march. Treachery revealed the plans of the confederates. Louis placed a strong body of his best troops on the route which the men from Ypres had to follow; they fell into the ambuscade at the close of a fatiguing march: the effect of the surprise, combined with their exhaustion, rendered victory easy; the men of Ypres fled almost without a blow, and, had they been closely pursued, not a man of them would have escaped. The fugitives made their way to Courtray, which had just been occupied by the men of Ghent, and declared that they had been betrayed into the hands of their enemies.

When once suspicion of treachery is raised in a multitude, it cannot be appeased without the sacrifice of some person; and in the burst of popular rage the innocent are often exposed to as much danger as the guilty. On this occasion, the wrath of the populace was vented upon a person wholly blameless. On the march, the men of Ypres had been doubtful respecting the road they should take; and their wrath was now directed against John Boule, by whose advice they had chosen that which led to the fatal ambuscade. A tumultuous body of soldiers rushed to the quarters of the unfortunate leader: in the clamour of the crowd it was impossible to hear a single word of his defence; he was dragged into the streets, and literally torn to pieces. The men of Ghent then returned home, and Ypres was abandoned to its own resources.

The civic aristocracy of Ypres, like that of Bruges, had been long alienated from the inferior trades, and had very reluctantly entered into a confederacy with the fierce democracy of Ghent: the recent defeat of the popular army gave the preponderance now to the higher class of burgesses; they resolved to capitulate to the earl, and the populace, disheartened by the loss of their bravest leaders, made no resistance. The gates of Ypres were opened to earl Louis: during his brief residence in the town, he caused seven hundred of the fullers and weavers to be beheaded; after which, he sent off three hundred of the principal inhabitants as hostages for the future fidelity of their fellow-citizens. These captives were detained in the prisons of Bruges, the inhabitants of which exhibited all the rancour of renegades to their former associates in the cause of freedom. Courtray followed the example of Ypres, and two hundred of its citizens were similarly taken as pledges for the future loyalty of the town.

Inspirited by this success, the earl resolved to lay siege to Ghent, having issued a summons to all his vassals throughout Flanders to hasten to his assistance. A numerous army was soon assembled, but it was not sufficient to complete the investiture of the city; the navigation of the Scheldt and the Lys continued open to the White-hoods: they received succours from Hainault and Brabant, but particularly from the cities of Brussels and Liege, which

had long been conspicuous for their devotion to the cause of municipal and commercial freedom. The citizens of Liege, who had as much reason to complain of their prince-bishop and the nobles of his court, as the citizens of Ghent had of their earl and the landed aristocracy, sent the following letter to the besieged, exhorting them to maintain a brave defence. "Good men of Ghent, we are well aware that at the present you have enough to do; that you are pressed by the earl your lord, and by the gentry, and the rest of the country, for which we are extremely sorry: know, that if you were only four or five leagues distant from our frontiers, we would send that succour which ought to be given to our brothers, friends, and neighbours; but you are too far from us, and the country of Brabant lies between, which is the cause that prevents us. Now, if you should be besieged at this moment, do not be cast down; for God knows, and all the principal towns, that you have justice on your side in this war, which must make your labours more effective."

The brave citizens of Ghent did not confine themselves merely to defence; a gallant little army held the field, attacking every post of the enemy which was either weak in strength or deficient in vigilance. Alost, Dendremonde, and Grammont were surprised by the White-hoods; the earl's convoys were intercepted, and his stragglers cut off. A detachment from Bruges was thus encountered

by the men of Ghent, who routed them with great slaughter. The Goldsmiths' company of Bruges suffered most severely; their banner was taken, and their entire band annihilated. Disheartened by these reverses, earl Louis raised the siege, and established his winter quarters at Oudenarde.

Early in the ensuing spring the earl took the field with twenty thousand men; while the men of Ghent raised two armies, one of ten, and one of eight thousand men, which acted separately, but agreed not to hazard a general battle except in conjunction. Unfortunately, Rasse de Harzelle, having gained several advantages in slight skirmishes, was so intoxicated with success, that, when he unexpectedly came in sight of the earl's forces near the town of Nevele,* he resolved to give them battle without waiting for the arrival of the other army, which was commanded by Peter du Bois. Although the earl's forces were three times more numerous than those of the insurgents, Harzelle's temerity had nearly been crowned with success; his furious charge broke through the earl's battalions, but his own ranks were thrown into disorder by the fury of the onset: the knights rallied after having outstripped their pursuers, and the men-at-arms again formed their battalions under the protection of a line of cavalry. Had Peter du Bois, who was in sight,

* Nevele is a large village, or town, about eight miles from Ghent: Barante, and other historians, have confounded it with Nivelles, a town of Brabant, about eighteen miles from Brussels.

come up at the critical moment, the men of Ghent would have triumphed; but their two armies were separated by deep marshes, through which Du Bois vainly attempted to force a passage. Harzelle did not yet despair; assisted by a brave leader, John de Launoy, he retreated on Nevele, where he made a gallant stand. Launoy rushed into the church, and posted himself and as many as he could in the large tower of the steeple, while Harzelle defended the square in front of the building. Louis and his knights made repeated charges on the square, but with no decisive success until Harzelle was slain. His immediate followers instantly fled, and the church was now the only place where resistance was protracted.

"When the earl of Flanders," says Froissart, "arrived at the square before the church, and saw that the Ghent men had retired into it, he ordered the church to be set on fire: his order was obeyed, and a fire was kindled with great quantities of straw and faggots, which they placed all round the church. The flames soon ascended to the roof, when the Ghent men perished miserably; for they were sure of being burnt if they stayed in the church, and, if they sallied out, they were slain and cast back into the fire. John de Launoy, who was in the steeple, perceiving himself at the point of death, and that he must soon be burnt, for the steeple was beginning to take fire, cried out to those below, 'Ransom! ransom!' and

offered his coat which was full of florins; but they laughed at and mocked him, saying, 'John, come and speak to us through these windows, and we will receive you. Make a handsome leap, John! such as you have forced our friends to take this year: you must make this leap!' John de Launoy, finding his situation desperate, and the fire so fast approaching that he must be burnt, grew enraged, and preferred being slain to meeting such a death. Both happened to him; for he leaped out of the window into the midst of his enemies, who received him on their spears, and, after hacking him to pieces, threw him into the flames."*

Peter du Bois effected his retreat in safety; but he was badly received in Ghent, where the fugitives had spread a report that their late disaster was chiefly to be attributed to his delay in joining Harzelle. Success in several subsequent skirmishes so raised the spirits of the insurgents that they once more resumed the offensive, and attacked several of the towns which had revolted from the confederacy. But these desultory enterprizes, sometimes successful and sometimes defeated, cost the lives of several of the most distinguished leaders: anarchy began to prevail in Ghent; all parties agreed that it was necessary either to make terms immediately with the earl, or to place at the head of the government some one who combined the qualifications of a general and a statesman. Such a

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 644.

man was found at the crisis, and we cannot do better than give Froissart's account of the remarkable man who was placed at the helm of affairs, and the circumstances under which he became the leader of the insurrection.

"When Peter du Bois saw Ghent thus weakened in her captains and soldiers, and deserted by her allies,—that the principal inhabitants began to tire,—he suspected they would readily give up the war; but that, whatever peace or treaty they should enter into with the earl, there would not be any possibility for him to save his life. He, therefore, called to his recollection John Hyons, who had been his master, and with what art he had worked: he saw plainly he could not do everything himself, not having sufficient weight nor knowledge to govern the town; neither did he wish for the principal command, being solely desirous of leading every mad enterprise. He, in consequence, turned his thoughts to a man of whom the city of Ghent had not any suspicions; one of sufficient prudence, though his abilities were unknown, for until that day they had not paid any attention unto him: his name was Philip Von Artaveld, son of Jacob Von Artaveld, who had ruled over all Flanders for seven years. Peter du Bois had heard it related by his master, John Hyons, and the old people of Ghent, that the whole country was never so well governed, feared, loved, and honoured as during the time of Jacob Von Artaveld's reign, which lasted for seven

years. The inhabitants added, that, if Jacob Von Artaveld were alive, things would not be in the state they are now in; they should have a peace according to their wishes, and the earl would be too happy to forgive them.

"These words made an impression on Peter du Bois; he recollected that Jacob Von Artaveld had left a son called Philip, a handsome and agreeable man, to whom the queen of England, when she was at Ghent, and during the time of the siege of Tournay, had stood godmother, and who, from respect to her, had been christened Philip. Peter du Bois came one evening to Philip's house, who resided with his mother, maintaining themselves honourably on their rents. Peter, having arranged in his own mind what he should say, thus opened the matter and the cause of his coming: 'If you will listen to me and follow my advice, I will make you the greatest man in Flanders.'—'How will you do this?' replied Philip. 'I will tell you how,' said Peter. 'You shall have the sole government of Ghent, for we are at this moment in the utmost want of a leader of a good name and fair character: by this means we shall rouse the men of Ghent, through remembrance of your father's fame; for every one says that Flanders was never so flourishing, nor so much feared, as during his lifetime. I will easily place you, if you be willing, in his situation; and, when there, you will govern according to my advice, until you find yourself master of the business, which you will soon acquire.'

"Philip, who was arrived at manhood, and naturally wished to advance himself in honour and wealth more than he then possessed, then replied, 'Peter, you offer me great things; and, if I be placed in the situation you say, I swear on my faith that I will never act without your advice.'

"Peter asked, 'Can you be cruel and proud? for a great man among the commonalty, and in particular among such as we shall have to do with, will not be thought anything worth if he be not feared and dreaded, and, at times, renowned for his cruelty. It is thus the Flemings wish to be governed; and among them men's lives should be no more valued, nor should they have more pity shown to them, than swallows or larks which are caught in the proper season for the table.'—'By my troth!' answered Philip, 'I know well how to act this part.'—'All, then, goes well,' said Peter; 'you are just such a one as I want, and the chief I look for.' On saying this, he took leave and departed to his own house. Night passed, and day returned, when Peter du Bois went to a square, where there were upwards of four thousand of his followers and others assembled, to hear the news, to discuss how matters ought to be carried on, and who should be governor of the town.

"The lord de Harzelle was there, who chiefly conducted the affairs of Ghent, but he would not undertake to do anything out of the town: some named him for governor; others were also nomi-

nated. Peter, who was listening attentively, having heard many names, raised his voice and said, 'Gentlemen, I have paid every attention to all you have said, and firmly believe you have been induced, through your love and affection for the honour and wealth of the town of Ghent, to propose such who are worthy to have a share in the government of this city; but I know one who in no way is thinking of it, but, if he would undertake the government, there could not be any one found of greater abilities nor of a more propitious name.' Peter du Bois was called upon to name him, which he did by saying, 'It was Philip Von Artaveld, who was christened at the font of St. Peter's, in Ghent, by that noble queen of England, Philippa, who was his godmother, at the time when his father, Jacob Von Artaveld, was at the siege of Tournay with the king of England, the duke of Brabant, the duke of Gueldres, and the earl of Hainault; which Jacob Von Artaveld, his father, governed the town of Ghent and the country of Flanders better than ever had been done since, from all I hear from those inhabitants who have it strong in their memories: Flanders had been for a time lost, if, through his sense and good-fortune, he had not regained it. Now, it behoves us to love the branches from such a valiant man, in preference to any other person.' No sooner had Peter du Bois done speaking than the idea of Philip Von Artaveld filled every one's mind, and encouraged

them so much that they unanimously cried out, 'Let him be sought for; we will not have any one but him for our governor.'—'No, no,' said Peter du Bois, 'we will not send for him, it will be much better we go to his house; for we do not at present know how he will take it. We ought not by any means to suffer him to excuse himself from accepting it.'

"At these words, those present took the road to Philip's house, followed by many others who had been informed of their intentions. When they arrived there, the lord de Harzelle, Peter du Bois, Peter la Nuitié, and about ten or twelve of the principal tradesmen, addressed him, saying, that the good town of Ghent was in the greatest danger for want of a chief with whom alliances might be formed at home and abroad; that all ranks of people in Ghent had given him their voices, and chosen him to be their sovereign; for the good remembrance of his name, and the love they had borne to his father, made him more agreeable to them than any one else; for which reasons they entreated him affectionately to take on him the government of the town, with the management of their officers, both within and without; and they would swear to him both obedience and loyalty as completely as to their lord. They likewise engaged to bring every one, however great soever he might be, under his obedience.

"Philip, after hearing everything they had to say,

made the following prudent reply: 'Gentlemen, you require great things from me; and I should imagine you have not weighed the matter so maturely as it ought to have been, when you offer me the government of Ghent. You say, the affection your ancestors had for my father has been your great inducement: when he had performed for them every service in his power, they murdered him. If I should accept the government in the manner you request, and be afterwards murdered, I shall gain but a miserable recompense.' — 'Philip,' said Peter du Bois, who caught at these words, which seemed to make his choice doubtful, 'what has passed, cannot now be amended: you will act from the advice of your council, and, by thus continuing, you will ever be so well advised that all mankind shall praise you.' Philip answered, 'I should never wish to act otherwise.' They then elected him, and, conducting him to the market-place, he was there sworn into office; the mayors, sheriffs, and rulers of companies were also sworn to obey him.

"In this manner was Philip Von Artaveld made sovereign of Ghent. He acquired great popularity at the commencement, for he spoke to every one who had any business with him politely and prudently, so that he was beloved by all. He gave a part of the revenues which the earl of Flanders had in Ghent as his inheritance to the lord de Harzelle, out of affection to him, to enable him

the better to support his rank, for he had lost everything he possessed without the walls of the town."*

Philip Von Artaveld was a very influential man among the mercantile aristocracy; the large fortune he had inherited from his father rendered him independent of trade, and it was only in compliance with custom that he entered his name, as did many knights and nobles, in the company of Brewers. Familiar as we are with this custom in England,—most of our leading men being enrolled in some or other of the London companies,—it has nevertheless led astray many modern historians, and led to fanciful parallels between the brewer of Ghent and the brewer of Huntingdon. Artaveld had up to this period kept himself aloof from the different parties in the state; the unmerited fate of his father disgusted him with the populace, while he was too wise to join the landed aristocracy, whose measures, he clearly saw, would ruin the manufacturing industry of the country. He displayed equal gentleness and firmness when placed at the head of affairs; while he treated courteously every citizen who made a complaint, he rigorously punished those who were detected in treasonable correspondence. Twelve influential burgesses and the syndic of the incorporated weavers were beheaded; but it has been insinuated that the proofs of their guilt was not sufficiently con-

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 647.

clusive, and that they were punished rather for their past share in the murder of Jacob Von Artaveld, than for their present treason.

The earl of Flanders again resumed the siege of Ghent; but, as before, was unable to block up all the avenues to the city. His favourite warrior, Walter lord of Enghien, however, harassed the people of Ghent in every direction: he took Grammont by storm, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. Irritated by this wanton massacre, the insurgents directed all their efforts against D'Enghien, and at last succeeded in surprising him by an ambuscade. The young lord, perceiving escape hopeless, exhorted his knights to sell their lives as dearly as possible: he fell, after a brave resistance; his body was borne in triumph into the city, and the earl could not obtain it for interment until he had paid a very considerable ransom. No event in the war grieved him so deeply as the premature death of his favourite. "Ah! Walter, Walter," he exclaimed, "my fair son, how unfortunate hast thou been to be thus cut off in thy youth! I wish every one to know that the men of Ghent shall never have peace with me until I greatly revenge myself." So great was his grief that he raised the siege, but he returned in a short time to his enterprise with fresh forces and wiser plans of operation. He sent to his cousins, the duke of Brabant and the earl of Hainault, pressing requests that they would prevent their subjects from supplying the men of Ghent

with provisions; and these nobles at once promised compliance. Scarcity was soon felt in the city, which, only for the Hollanders, would have been reduced to famine. Artaveld* therefore listened to the proposals of peace which were made at the suggestion of the duke of Brabant and the prince-bishop of Liege; a congress was appointed at Harlebecque, near Courtray, and twelve deputies went thither from Ghent, selected from those citizens who had been the most zealous advocates of peace.

Unfortunately, the deputies, instead of insisting on a general amnesty, agreed to sacrifice their political opponents to the earl's resentment, and were so pleased with the result that they could not keep their own secret. When asked, on their return, what intelligence they brought, they replied, "Good people, we shall have, if it please God, an excellent peace for those who are well-inclined and keep quiet; and some of the wicked ones in the town will be punished." This ominous threat was soon whispered about: the leaders of the White-hoods knew very well that "the wicked ones," in political parlance, meant the opponents of those who used the opprobrious name; and they spent the night in devising plans to avert the fate with which they

* M. Voisin, who has carefully examined the original authorities, strongly asserts that Artaveld was anxious for peace, if it could be obtained on equitable conditions. Froissart is silent respecting his share in the negotiations, but seems to infer that he was disinclined to any treaty with the earl of Flanders.

were menaced. Artaveld and Peter du Bois took the lead in organizing a firm resistance to the proposals of the deputies, and had their armed retainers ready in the market-place, where the articles of the treaty were to be read for public approbation.*

At nine o'clock in the morning, the citizens assembled to hear the terms offered by the earl. Two of the principal deputies, Simon Bette and Gilbert de Grutere, came forward, and the senior of them addressed the multitude in the following terms: "Gentlemen of Ghent, we have attended the conferences at Harlebecque; and we have had much labour and difficulty, in conjunction with the good men of Brabant, Liege, and Hainault, in making up our disputes with the earl our lord. However, at the entreaty of the duke and duchess of Brabant, who had sent thither their council, as well as duke Albert (of Holland), the good town of Ghent is at peace with the earl, on condition that two hundred men-at-arms, whose names he will send within fifteen days in writing, shall surrender themselves to his prison in the castle of Lille, to his pure will: he is so noble and generous that he will show them mercy and pardon." Former experience had shown the citizens of Ghent the character of their ruler in its true colours: they were by no means disposed to trust to the nobility and

* Froissart says that all the White-hoods came armed to the assembly, but Meyer declares that the leaders only had weapons.

generosity so liberally attributed to him by the deputies; there was not one in the assembly who could be ignorant that assenting to his demands would be the death-warrant of the two hundred citizens. Peter du Bois took this view of the matter: when the deputies had concluded, he sprung to his feet, and exclaimed, "Gilbert de Grutere, how have you dared to enter into any treaty that should put two hundred of our citizens into the enemy's hands? Better would it be for Ghent to be completely overturned than to be reproached for having so scandalously concluded the war. We thoroughly understand that neither you nor Simon Bette will be amongst the two hundred." A fierce tumult arose: the partisans of Peter du Bois and Philip Von Artaveld raised the cry of treason; the two deputies fell beneath their daggers; and a vote was tumultuously passed for renewing the war, unless more favourable conditions were offered.

The earl of Flanders was dreadfully enraged when he heard that the peace had been rejected in Ghent: instead of taking the field, he had recourse to the measures which had already proved effective; he engaged the princes of Holland, Zealand, Brabant, and Hainault to forbid the exportation of provisions to Ghent; and the insurgents were soon reduced to great straits from want of their usual supplies. "It was thought by the most intelligent that it could not be long before they perished through famine,

for all the store-houses of corn were empty, and the people could not obtain bread for money: when the bakers had baked any, it was necessary to guard their shops; for the populace, who were starving, would have broken them open. It was melancholy to hear these poor people (for men, women, and children of good substance were in this miserable plight) make their daily complaints and cries to Philip Von Artaveld. He took great compassion on them, and made several good regulations; for which he was much praised. He ordered the granaries of the monasteries and rich men to be opened, and divided the corn among the poor at a fixed price. By such means he gave comfort to the town of Ghent, and governed it well." * This testimony to the ability displayed by Artaveld at this difficult crisis is the more valuable as it comes from the pen of one of his most bitter opponents.

A body of soldiers and citizens, amounting to about twelve thousand men, set out from Ghent in search of provisions; they presented themselves before the gates of Brussels, where the citizens gave them a supply of food sufficient for their immediate wants. Thence they went to Louvain, where they experienced similar sympathy. Being so near Liege, they sent deputies to that city, which from the beginning had shown warm affection for their cause. The magistrates of Liege and their prince-bishop offered their services as mediators between the earl

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 695.

of Flanders and the revolters; while the citizens declared to the deputies, "We will now do everything we can for you, and as you are merchants, and merchandize ought to pass freely everywhere, we have determined that at this moment you may contract for five or six hundred cart-loads of corn and flour, which we will allow you to have, provided the good people from whom this provision comes can be satisfied. Our commerce will be suffered to pass through Brabant, for that people is in friendship with us; and, notwithstanding Brussels is shut against you, we know it is more through fear than inclination. The Brusselers have great compassion on your sufferings; but the duke and duchess of Brabant, at the solicitation of the earl of Flanders, are more his friends than yours, as it is natural that great lords should support each other." *

On his return, Ackerman, with the consent of his followers, paid a visit to the duchess of Brabant, who resided in Brussels, to beg of her to join the bishop of Liege in mediating a stable peace between the earl of Flanders and his good city of Ghent. "I have long bewailed," said the duchess, "the dissensions which have arisen between my brother † and you, and would have put an end to them before, had I been able, or had I known how to do it; but you so often oppose him, and are so obstinate in your opinions, that

* Froissart, ubi suprà.

† The earl of Flanders was married to a sister of the duchess.

it keeps up his anger and hatred against you. Notwithstanding all this, for the love of God and through compassion, I will cheerfully undertake this business, and send to request he will have the goodness to come to Tournay, where I will order my privy council. You must also exert yourselves to gain the council of Hainault to accompany that of Liege, which you say is ready to serve you."* After this interview Ackerman returned to Ghent with the waggons of provision, which were heartily greeted by the famishing citizens; but this relief was soon exhausted, and they were unable to discover the means for obtaining a fresh supply.

If earl Louis had been disposed to grant favourable terms to the citizens of Ghent, which indeed is rather doubtful, he was surrounded by persons who used their utmost efforts to urge him to persevere in harsh measures. The landed aristocracy and proud knights could not forgive their repeated defeats by traders and artisans whom they had been accustomed to despise; the hungry adventurers who had joined the earl from the surrounding principalities, being chiefly the unportioned younger branches of titled families, could not abandon the hopes of confiscation and plunder; but, above all, the renegades, who had been induced to desert the cause of the confederates by grants

* Froissart, ubi suprà.

of what they believed to be lucrative monopolies, all joined in persuading the earl that famine must soon compel the revolters to surrender at discretion, and that therefore he might insist on any terms he pleased. Influenced by these interested advisers, the earl refused to attend the conferences at Tournay; though he was aware that the citizens of Ghent were resolved to grant him very large concessions, and had even agreed that, provided he spared life, he should be permitted to banish every obnoxious person he pleased; "and Philip Von Artaveld was willing, if he should have angered the earl ever so little during the time he was governor of Ghent, to be one of the banished men for life, out of the regard he had for the lower classes of the people." * But, though

* Froissart, ubi suprà.—The author of an exquisitely beautiful dramatic poem on the career of Philip Von Artaveld has been eminently successful in developing the unselfish nature of the ambition by which the patriot leader was animated. Take, for instance, the following part of a scene in which Van der Bosch remonstrates against the admission of the herald from Bruges, lest the starving multitude should seize their leaders and deliver them to the earl as the price of their pardon.

Van der Bosch.—Hast thou authority to take my life?
What is it else to let yon herald in
To bargain for our blood?
Artaveld. Thy life again!
Why, what a very slave of life art thou!
Look round about on this once populous town:
Not one of those innumerous house-tops
But hides some spectral form of misery;

Some

the earl refused to be present at the conferences of Tournay, he sent a specification of the only terms on which he would grant peace. The terms are stated faithfully in the following lines, by the au-

> Some peevish, pining child and moaning mother;
> Some aged man, that in his dotage scolds,
> Not knowing why he hungers; some cold corse
> That lies unstraightened where the spirit left it.
> Look round, and answer what thy life can be
> To tell upon the balance of such scales?
> I too would live—I have a love for life—
> But, rather than to live to charge my soul
> With one hour's lengthening out of woes like these,
> I 'd leap this parapet with as free a bound
> As e'er was schoolboy's o'er a garden wall.
>
> *Philip Von Artav.* i. 179.

Still more finely is the moral purity of patriotism exhibited, as a sustaining force under adverse circumstances, in his parting address to the people.

> *Artareld.*—Fortune has not been kind to me, good friends;
> But let not that deprive me of your loves,
> Or of your good report. Be this the word:
> My rule was brief, calamitous—but just.
> No glory which a prosperous fortune gilds,
> If shorn of this addition, could suffice
> To lift my heart so high as it is now.
> This is that joy, in which my soul is strong,
> That there is not a man amongst you all
> Who can reproach me that I used my power
> To do him an injustice. If there be,
> It is not to my knowledge; yet I pray him
> That he will now forgive me, taking note
> That I had not to deal with easy times.
> *Citizens.*—Oh! Master Philip, there is none—not one!
> Most wisely and most justly have you ruled us.

thor of the romantic drama of Philip Von Artaveld,

> That every man and woman born in Ghent
> Should meet him half-way on the road to Bruges,
> Barefooted and bareheaded, in their shirts,
> With halters on their necks, and there kneel down
> And place their lives and chattels at his mercy.

The deputies from Ghent refused to consent to their citizens being led as sheep to the slaughter; they declared that they could give no answer to such terms without consulting their constituents, and they returned homewards with heavy hearts. Intelligence of the earl's savage vindictiveness was spread through the city: some wished for peace on any terms; others boldly declared that it was better to die with arms in their hands than to be decimated by a tyrant; but all agreed to wait until Artaveld declared his sentiments at the public assembly on the following day. The meeting was held at nine in the morning, and it was opened by a formal report from the deputies, who stated the earl's terms without a word of comment. The whole multitude burst into tears and lamentations; nor was the tumult appeased until Artaveld rose, and addressed the citizens in the following terms: "Worthy inhabitants of Ghent, you who are here assembled are the majority of its citizens, and you have heard all I had to report to you: I see no means of remedy but a determined conduct. You know how very much straitened we are for

all sorts of provisions, and that there are thirty thousand persons in this town who have not eaten bread for fifteen days. In my opinion we have but the choice of three things: the first, that we close all our gates; and then, after having confessed most fully, retire into the churches and monasteries, and there die, repentant and confessed, like martyrs to whom no mercy has been shown. In this state God will have pity on us and on our souls; and, wherever this shall be told or heard, they will say that we died nobly, like loyal men-at-arms. Or let us resolve to march out, men, women, and children, with halters about our neck, bare-headed and with naked feet, and implore the mercy of our lord the earl: he is not so hard-hearted nor so obstinate, but, when he shall see us in such a humiliating condition, he will be softened and take pity on his subjects; and I will be the first to offer him my head, in order to assuage his hatred, and sacrifice myself for the good city of Ghent. Or let us choose from five to six thousand of the most determined men in the town, and instantly march to attack the earl in Bruges: we will give him combat; and if we should be slain in the attempt, at least we shall die with honour, and God will have mercy upon us; and the world will say that we have gallantly and valorously maintained our quarrel. If, however, in this battle we be victorious, and our Lord God, who in ancient times delegated his power into the

hands of Judas Maccabæus, the chief of his Jewish people, so that the Syrians were defeated and slain, would be indulgent enough to grant us this kindness, we should be everywhere the most honoured people since the time of the Romans. Now, consider which of these three propositions you will make choice of, for one of them must be adopted." *

The great majority of the auditory exclaimed that they reposed implicit confidence in his wisdom, and that they would be guided by his choice. Such a proof of attachment at such a moment was the noblest tribute ever paid to a popular leader. Artaveld replied that he advised them once more to hazard the result of battle. A shout of applause immediately sanctioned the proposal; each citizen hastened to make preparations for a march in the morning, and the gates of Ghent were kept carefully closed, to prevent the enemy from receiving any intelligence of their proceedings.

Rarely has the world seen such a spectacle as Ghent displayed on the following morning. About five thousand men were found fit for duty in the

* Froissart, ubi suprà.—Mr. Henry Taylor has given a very spirited version of this speech in the drama from which we have already quoted; but the rugged simplicity of the old chronicler seems to be in better harmony with the noble spirit and high resolve of the patriot, than the melody of verse. We have not been able to quote, and we do not envy those who can read without emotion, Philip's calm proposal of three chances to the citizens, two of which were certain, and the third likely to be fatal to himself.

city; famine had reduced the rest to such skeletons that they could not sustain the weight of weapons, or the fatigues of a march. Their baggage consisted of about two hundred waggons laden with cannon* and artillery, and only seven with provisions; that is, five with bread and two with wine. The citizens followed their forlorn hope to a short distance beyond the gates; "it was a miserable spectacle to see those who went, and those who remained behind."† But neither were deficient in courage: those who were to remain informed the volunteers that it would be useless to return unless victorious, for that, the instant intelligence arrived of their defeat or death, they had resolved to set fire to the city and perish in the flames. Several patriotic priests and monks, notwithstanding the pope's denunciation of the revolt, accompanied the insurgent army: they preached to the soldiers on the glorious deliverances which God in the olden time had accorded to his chosen people; they told them that they had a righteous cause, and that they ought to trust in the God of battles to give the victory to justice. On the morning of the second day they arrived in sight of Bruges; mass was celebrated, and more than three-fourths of the soldiers received the eucharist.‡ Artaveld then ad-

* The cannons of that age were light swivels, mounted on carriages not unlike wheel-barrows, which could be manœuvred by one or two men.

† Froissart, ut antè, i. 700.

‡ Meyer dwells at some length on the spirit of devotion which

dressed his men with great eloquence; after which he ordered their slight stock of provision to be distributed amongst them, saying, "My good friends, you see here all your provision: divide it among you fairly, like brethren, without any disturbance; for, when it is gone, you must conquer more, if you wish to live."

It was the morning of the feast of the Holy Cross,* which the inhabitants of Bruges celebrated with solemn processions, followed by the usual festivities of a holyday. In the midst of the revelry, intelligence was received of the approach of the men of Ghent and the paucity of their numbers. Instant orders were given to assemble the earl's forces; the citizens of Bruges, full of exultation, hurried out of their gates, and it was with great difficulty that the trained soldiers could restrain their eager impetuosity. When they came within sight of the men of Ghent, the shades of evening were beginning to fall: the earl wished to defer the battle until the ensuing day; but the citizens of Bruges insisted on an immediate battle, and the men-at-arms, not to be outdone, hasted forward to a tumultuous assault. A smart fire of artillery commenced the engagement; under the

the citizens of Ghent united with their love of freedom. Their piety was unostentatious, it existed more in principle than in form; and it tended not a little to inspire the calm and resolute determination which was evinced by Artaveld and his followers.

* Saturday the 2nd of May, 1382, according to *L'Art de vérifier les dates.*

cover of the smoke Artaveld executed the delicate manœuvre of changing his front, so as to bring his adversaries to face the dazzling light of the setting sun. Perplexed by this change of line, confounded by the glare, and severely galled by a close and murderous flight of arrows, the men of Bruges fell into confusion. Artaveld seized the decisive moment to charge: the braggarts of Bruges proved the veriest cowards that ever disgraced a stricken field; they threw away their staves, spears, and bows, and fled in such disorderly speed, that the knights and men-at-arms became entangled in the press, and were forced to join in the flight. Artaveld hotly pursued, anxious to prevent the fugitives from closing the gates of their city: he succeeded. Conquerors and conquered burst together into Bruges; not a man in the city was found to strike a blow in its defence; the knights galloped off to the country, the burgesses ran to hide in their garrets and cellars; the earl was deserted, and it was only by a series of almost marvellous chances that he escaped falling into the hands of his irritated subjects. The particulars of his escape are told with great dramatic effect and picturesque interest by Froissart.

"In the mean time that the earl was at his lodging, and sent forth the clerks of every ward from street to street to have every man to draw to the market-place to recover the town, they of Ghent pursued their enemies so fiercely that they entered

into the town with them of Bruges; and as soon as they were within the town, the first thing they did, they went straight to the market-place, and there set themselves in array. The earl had then sent a knight of his, called Sir Robert Mareschault, to the gate, to see what they of Ghent did; and, when he came to the gate, he found it beaten down and the enemy masters of the passage; and some of them of Bruges met with him and said—'Sir Robert, return, and save yourself if you can, for the town is in the possession of our enemies.' Then the knight returned to the earl as fast as he could, who was coming out of his lodging on horseback, with a great number of cressets and torches with him, and was going to the market-place; and, as he was entering, such as were before him, seeing their enemies all ranged in the place, said to the earl, 'Sir, return again; if you go any farther, you will be killed or taken by your enemies, for they are ranged in the market-place and wait for you.' They showed him truth. And when the conquerors saw those clear lights coming down the street, they said, 'Yonder cometh the earl; he will fall into our hands.' And Philip Von Artaveld had commanded from street to street as he went, that, if the earl came among them, no man should do him any bodily harm, but take him alive, and then have him to Ghent, and so to make their peace as they pleased. . . . . The earl, who hoped to have recovered all, came near to the place where they of Ghent

were. Then divers of his men said, 'Sir, go no further, for your enemies are lords of the market-place and of the town: if you enter into the market-place, you are in danger of being taken or slain; a great number of your enemies are going from street to street seeking their enemies; they have certain of them of the town to conduct them from house to house where they would be: and, sir, you cannot issue out of any of the gates, for the enemy is possessed of them; nor can you return to your own lodging, for your enemies are going thither.' And when the earl heard those tidings, which much distressed him, as may be imagined, he was greatly alarmed, and considered the danger he was in. Then he believed the counsel, and would go no further, but endeavour to save himself; so he took his own counsel. He commanded all the lights to be put out, and said to those about him, 'I see well there is no recovery; let every man depart, and save himself as well as he can.' And it was done as he commanded; the lights were quenched and cast into the street, and every man departed.

"The earl then went into a back lane, and made a varlet of his to unarm him, and cast away his armour, and put on an old cloak of his varlet's, and then said to him, 'Go your way from me, and save yourself if you can, and have a good tongue if you fall into the hands of your enemies; and, if they ask anything of me, do not acknowledge that

I am in the town.' He answered and said, 'Sir, I had rather die than betray you.' Thus, about the hour of midnight, the earl went from street to street, and by back lanes, so that at last he was fain to take a house, or else he had been taken by his enemies. And so, as he went about the town, he entered into a poor woman's house, which was not fit for such a lord:, there was neither hall, parlour, nor chamber; it was a poor smoky house; there was nothing but one poor place black with smoke, and above a small room with a ladder of seven steps to go up to it, and in that room was a mean couch, where the poor woman's children lay. Then the earl, much alarmed and trembling, said as he entered, 'O good woman, save me; I am thy lord, the earl of Flanders; but now I must hide myself, for my enemies pursue me, and, if you do me a service now, I shall reward you for it hereafter.' The poor woman knew him well, for she had been often at his gate to fetch alms, and had often seen him going and returning from sporting; so she immediately consented, for, if she had made any delay, he had been taken talking with her by the fire. Then she said, 'Sir, mount up this ladder, and lay yourself under the bed you find there, where my children sleep.' And in the mean time the woman sat down by the fire, with another child that she had in her arms. So the earl mounted the ladder as well as he could, and crept between the

couch and the straw, and lay as flat as possible. And immediately some of his enemies entered the house, for some of them said they had seen a man enter the house before them; and so they found the woman sitting at the fire with her child. Then they said, 'Good woman, where is the man we saw enter this house before us, and shut the door after him?'—'Sirs,' quoth she, 'I saw no man enter here this night; I went out just now and cast out a little water, and shut my door again. If any were here, I could not hide him; you see all my house at once: here is my bed, and up this ladder lie my poor children.' Then one of them took a candle, and mounted up the ladder and looked, and saw only the poor couch where the children lay asleep; and so he looked all about, and then said to his company, 'Let us go hence, we are losing time; the poor woman speaks the truth, here is no creature but she and her children:' and then they departed out of the house. After this there were none entered to do any hurt. All these words the earl heard well while he lay under the couch: you may suppose he was in great fear for his life. He might well say, 'I am now one of the poorest princes in the world; how uncertain are the affairs of this world!' Yet it was fortunate he escaped with his life; howbeit, this dangerous adventure might well be to him a memorial all his life after, and an example to all others."*

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 703.

To prevent any further reference to the subject, we add the particulars of his final deliverance, from the same author:

"I was informed, and I believe it to be true, that on the Sunday at night the earl of Flanders issued out of the town of Bruges; by what means I cannot say, but I believe he was assisted. He issued out all alone on foot, in an old simple cloak; and when he came into the fields he was glad, for then he thought he had escaped great danger. So he went forth at a venture, and stopped at a thick bush to see what way he might take, for he knew not the ways, nor was he accustomed to travel on foot: and, as he stood under the bush, he heard by chance a man speak as he came by, and it was a knight of his, called Sir Robert Mareschault, who had married his bastard daughter. The earl knew him by his voice, and, as he passed by, he said, 'Robert, are you there?' The knight, who knew the earl by his speech, said, 'Ah, sir! I have been seeking for you this day in many places about Bruges; how did you get out?'—'Let us go our way,' quoth the earl, 'it is not time to tell our adventures. I pray you, let us endeavour to get a horse, for I am greatly fatigued with going on foot; and, I pray you, let us take the way to Lisle, if you know it.'—'Yes, sir,' replied the knight, 'I know it well;' and so they travelled till the next morning without being able to get a horse: but they

found a mare, which they took from a poor man in a village, and on which the earl rode without saddle or pommel; and at night came to Lisle, where the greatest part of his knights had arrived who fled from the field, some on foot, and some on horseback."*

Seldom has so decisive a victory been obtained so utterly unexpected by all parties: the people of Ghent had made no preparations for such a result; but Ackerman, who commanded under Artaveld, circulated orders to the different battalions not to offer any injury to the foreign merchants or strangers in the town. The brunt of the rage of the conquerors fell upon the four trades of jerkin-makers, glass-men, butchers, and fishermen, which, for various reasons, but chiefly on account of the monopolies granted them, had been warm partisans of the earl; they were sought for everywhere, and when found were slain without mercy. Twelve hundred were slain on the night of the storm, and this massacre was accompanied with great disorder and pillage. A party of the conquerors stormed the earl's castle of Mâle; it was plundered of all its wealth: among the spoils was found the silver cradle which had been used by several generations of the earls of Flanders; it was broken to pieces and melted down. Louis is said to have been more mortified by this loss than by that of his castle.

* Froissart, vol. ii. chap. cxxxii.

On the following morning, Artaveld honourably exerted himself to prevent any further outrages. "No people," says Froissart, "ever behaved themselves better towards their enemies than the men of Ghent did to those of Bruges, nor conducted themselves more graciously to a conquered town; they did no harm to any of the small tradesmen, unless there were very strong accusations against them. When Philip Von Artaveld, Peter du Bois, and the other captains were completely masters of the place, they issued out a proclamation in their name for all persons to retire to their houses, and that no one should break open or pillage any house, or be any way instrumental in raising riots, under pain of death." This prudence was well rewarded: most of the Flemish cities opened their gates to the conquerors; they vied with each other in sending abundance of provisions to relieve the distress of Ghent. Abundance soon took the place of famine; and, if Artaveld had possessed any share of selfish ambition, he might have proclaimed himself sovereign of Flanders with almost universal approbation. He was proclaimed father and liberator of his country, titles which he preferred to those of duke and earl; but he was well aware that fresh dangers were impending over Flanders, which menaced ruin to the liberties that had been so dearly purchased.

CHAPTER IX.

Insurrections of the Middle Classes against Feudalism, continued.—Overthrow of the White-hoods.—End of the War in Flanders.

THROUGHOUT the whole of Western Europe the greatest excitement was produced by the successful progress of the insurrection in Flanders. It was believed that the complete triumph of the citizens of Ghent would lead to a general rising of the commonalty against the feudal lords throughout Christendom. Paris, to which the Capets obstinately refused municipal institutions, was engaged in a contest for civic freedom, "all by the example of them of Ghent," say the contemporary historians. An incorporation of the citizens, called "the army with mallets," threatened to become as formidable as the White-hoods; Nicholas le Flamand could only deter them from pulling down the Louvre by urging the expediency of waiting to see the result of the war in Flanders. Rouen, Orleans, Rheims, and several other cities showed equal impatience of feudal bondage; and the towns of Languedoc, beginning to recover from the mi-

series inflicted on them during the infamous Albigensian war, aspired after their former privileges, and would probably have taken up arms, had not the brutal tyranny of those nobles to whom the confiscated lands of the Albigenses were assigned provoked an insurrection of the peasants, to whom their lords refused even the miserable repose of slavery. The Tuchins, as the revolted peasants of Languedoc were called, were desperate men, whom deliberate and systematic oppression had reduced to the condition of wild beasts. They exhibited all the ferocity of tortured tigers escaped from their keepers; they were equally ready to rend those who endeavoured to alleviate their misery, and those who had been the authors of their sufferings. By increasing the ruin and devastation of the open country, the Tuchins at once impoverished and isolated the cities; it was impossible for the friends of freedom in one city to communicate with those of similar sentiments in other places. An alliance with the revolted peasantry was out of the question; they had been too thoroughly brutalized to take any share in the establishment of social order.*

* Sismondi, xi. 378.—The author of Philip Von Artaveld has put into the mouth of the duke of Burgundy the sentiments with which the Flemish insurrection was viewed by the feudal nobles of France and Germany:

Let this have leave to grow,
And French insurgents shall from Flemish learn
The tricks of treason,—German boors from both;
Till

Brabant, Burgundy, and the lower parts of Germany were in a similar condition; all the large cities felt deeply interested in the success of Ghent; the citizens of Brussels and Liege not only avowed their sympathy openly, but sent volunteers to share in the fight for freedom. England did not escape the influence of the general movement; Wat Tyler's rebellion was contemporaneous, and not unconnected with the wars in Flanders. But none viewed the progress of events with more anxiety than the dukes and council of regency in France: Philip of Burgundy,* who directed the

> Till kings and princes, potentates and peers,
> Landgraves, electors, palatines, and prelates,
> Dukes, earls, and knights shall be no more accounted
> Than as the noblest and the loftiest trees,
> Which, when the woodman walks the forest through,
> He marketh for the axe.
>
> *Philip Von Art.* ii. 10.

* The duke of Burgundy's reasons for joining the earl of Flanders are detailed with equal historic truth and poetic beauty in the drama already quoted:

> No soil in Christendom but fits my reasons;
> No soil where virtue, chivalry, and honour
> Are fed and flourish, but shall fit them well.
> When honour and nobility fall prone
> In Flanders, think you they stand fast in France?
> Or, losing ground in France, have hope elsewhere?
> This by no narrow bound is circumscribed;
> It is the cause of chivalry at large.
> Though heir to Flanders, I am Frenchman born,
> And nearer have at heart the weal of France
> Than my far-off inheritance. Go to:
> Lay me before the council the sad truth Of

entire administration, was the son-in-law and destined heir of the earl of Flanders; his own duchy had not escaped the general infection, but he was most alarmed by the increasing disaffection of Paris, where the royal authority was held at defiance. The citizens of France, however, were as yet weak: in the recent wars with England, most of the smaller boroughs and towns had been destroyed; the links of connection for anything like a simultaneous movement were wanting; the elements of insurrection were isolated, and separated from each other by very wide intervals; while the forces of the regency and the nobles were concentrated, and held together by the bonds of common interest. They had on their side the multitude of placemen and pensioners whom they supported out of the spoils of the people; all the nobles and knights who were jealous of civic wealth, or whose varied means of extortion were menaced by the increase of municipal privileges; and, finally, their hosts of soldiers and armed retainers, who, having exhausted the country by their repeated pillaging excursions, were now athirst for the plunder of the cities.

> Of these distractions that so rock the realm,—
> Paris possess'd by Nicholas le Flamand,
> Where law 's a nothing and the king a name;
> Armies with mallets but beginning there,
> And gathering like the snow-wreaths in a storm,
> Before a man hath time to get him hous'd.
>
> *Philip Von Art.* ii. 5.

Earl Louis, having escaped to Lille as already described, issued circulars to all the nobility and gentry of the Netherlands, requesting them to aid his cause, and not to suffer their power to be usurped by vulgar upstarts. But the spirit of independence and freedom manifested by the citizens of Louvain, Liege, Brussels, and the other cities daunted the feudal lords; it was with great difficulty that he collected one hundred and fifty knights and three hundred men-at-arms to reinforce the garrison of Oudenarde: he entrusted the command of these troops to an able leader, Daniel de Halewyn, and exhorted him to defend himself to the uttermost, as his last hope remained in Oudenarde; that town and Dendremonde being the only places of any importance in Flanders which had not submitted to the revolters. We find, from all the contemporary historians, that the anger of the feudal lords was greatly increased by the almost royal state which Artaveld affected: they deemed it an intolerable grievance that the luxuries and magnificence, which they believed to be the exclusive prerogatives of men descended from the victorious race of soldiers, should not only be equalled, but surpassed, by a brewer and a demagogue.*

* Von Artaveld, 'tis said, in all things apes
The state and bearing of a sovereign prince;
Has bailiffs, masters of the house, receivers,
A chamber of accompts, a hall of audience,

Off

Artaveld was not less impressed with the importance of Oudenarde than the earl; so soon as he had restored order to the different towns which had opened their gates, he assembled all his forces to besiege this refractory place. Louis, who had just obtained possession of the county of Artois by the death of his mother, went to Arras to collect additional forces; he met with considerable success among his new subjects, who were unacquainted with the pusillanimity and cruelty of his character. At Bapaume he had an interview with his son-in-law, the duke of Burgundy, from whom he received promises of speedy assistance. As his hopes began to rise, he felt more disposed to indulge his natural ferocity: he ordered the hostages given him at Courtray, who unfortunately happened to be detained in the prisons of Bapaume, to be beheaded; and he was with difficulty prevented from perpetrating a similar massacre on the inhabitants of Courtray and Ypres.* The duke of Burgundy had sufficient influence not only to save the lives of these men, but to procure their liberation; a conciliatory measure which might have produced a very powerful effect had it been earlier adopted.

> Off gold and silver eats, is clad in robes
> Of scarlet furred with minever, gives feasts
> With minstrelsy and dancing, night and day,
> To damsels and to ladies.
>
> *Philip Von Art.* ii. 14.

* Meyer, Ann. Fland. xiii. 185.

Oudenarde was vigorously attacked and valiantly defended during the entire summer. The besiegers hoped that they could starve the garrison into a capitulation, for the town was too strong to be taken by storm; but at the same time they employed against the walls every engine which the military skill of the age had yet devised. "They with much labour placed on the hill of Oudenarde a prodigiously great engine, twenty feet wide and forty long, which they called a mutton,* to cast heavy stones and beams of timber into the town, and crush everything that they should fall on. They had also, the more to alarm the garrison, fired a bombard of a very great size, which was fifty feet in length, and shot stones of an immense weight.† When they fired off this bombard, it might be heard five leagues off in the daytime, and ten at night. The report of it was so loud that it seemed as if all the devils in hell had broken loose. The Ghent men made, likewise, another engine, which they pointed against the

* We have not been able to find any accurate description of this machine. It was the custom in the middle ages to give the most whimsical names to the wooden towers and military engines used in sieges; we read of "cats, foxes, muttons, sows," and other such strange engines, in all the old histories. The "sow," mentioned subsequently, was a kind of pent-house, under the protection of which the besiegers approached to undermine the wall. On one occasion the garrison of a besieged place crushed in the roof with heavy stones; and, when those underneath ran away, they boasted that they had caused "the sow to farrow."

† Meyer makes no mention of this singular piece of ordnance.

town, to cast large bars of hot copper. With such machines as cannons, bombards, sows, and muttons, did the Ghent men labour to annoy the garrison of Oudenarde. They, however, comforted each other as well as they could, and defended themselves against these attacks. They made sallies three or four times a-week, in which they gained more honour than disgrace, and also more profit than loss." *

Artaveld was disappointed, and his followers greatly irritated, by the long and successful resistance of Oudenarde: they vented their indignation by sending out detachments to pillage the earl's lands in West Flanders, but unfortunately these marauders were not very discriminating in their ravages; they plundered and burned the town of Helbin, and some of the adjacent villages, belonging to the king of France. The young monarch, devoted to pleasure, had been hitherto averse to war, and his pacific dispositions had been encouraged by the rivals of the duke of Burgundy in the council; but his pride was roused by the duke's crafty suggestions that the mechanics of Ghent intended to insult his royalty by invading his territories, and the king exhibited all the eagerness of a youthful, ill-regulated temper to obtain revenge. He even violated the usages of civilized nations by throwing into prison an envoy sent by Artaveld to explain the causes of the insurrection,

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 710.

and invite the French monarch to act the part of a mediator. The pretence for this outrage was some defect in the envoy's passport.

Charles VI. had barely attained the age of fourteen; the pleasure of wearing brilliant armour, and of prancing on a caparisoned steed at the head of his splendid chivalry, the desire of a boy to rank prematurely as a man, and the contempt for the people which had been carefully instilled into his mind by his uncles, were probably more influential than any political motives in urging him to undertake this war. He professed to be impatient at the long delays of the council; and, before an army could be assembled, he unfurled the Oriflamme at St. Denis, (August 18th, 1382,) with all the solemn and gorgeous ceremonies usual on such occasions.

Artaveld was well aware that Flanders could not resist the united forces of the entire French monarchy; he therefore resolved to seek the aid of England. Deputies were sent to offer Richard II. the recognition of his title to the throne of France, and at the same time to point out to the English government the imminent peril to which their political and commercial interests would be exposed if the sea-ports of Flanders should be placed at the disposal of the court of Paris. Had Richard II. possessed either the wisdom or the valour of his father or grandfather, he would not have waited for any solicitation to interfere in the wars of

Flanders; but he was a feeble profligate, intoxicated by the praises which the courtiers bestowed on the craftiness and perfidy he had displayed in suppressing Wat Tyler's insurrection. This circumstance also must have led him to look with no very favourable eye on the attempts made by the Flemings to assert the rights of citizens to good government; and, finally, he must have known that the recognition of his title to the French crown could be nothing more than an idle form. Artaveld had further endangered his success by demanding the repayment of four hundred thousand crowns, which the cities of Flanders had lent to Edward III.; but, in fact, any proposal was sure to fail in the debauched court of the imbecile Richard, if it had the misfortune to be recommended by common sense and common honesty. That this opinion is not too harsh, will be conceded when we examine the account which Froissart gives of the reception of the Flemish embassy.

"When these Ghent men were come to London, their arrival was soon known, and information of it carried to the king and his council, who sent to them to know what they wanted. They came in a body to the palace of Westminster, where they were first met by the duke of Lancaster, the earl of Buckingham, the earl of Salisbury, and the greater part of the council; but the king was not present at this first interview.

"These ambassadors having made their obeisances

to the English lords, the bishop elect of Ghent spoke for them all, saying, 'My lords, we are come hither by orders from the town of Ghent, and from all Flanders, to request counsel and assistance from the king of England on account of certain articles, and for reason of certain alliances, which subsisted between England and Flanders. We wish to renew them, as the country of Flanders now stands in need of assistance, being at this moment without a lord. The principal towns, and the country, have chosen a regent, named Philip Von Artaveld, who recommends himself particularly to the king, and to you all, who are of his council. He entreats you to receive this commendation in good part; for, if the king shall wish to come into Flanders, he will find all its ports open, and the country well-disposed towards him, where he may repose and refresh himself and people as long as he shall please, and he may call upon Flanders for one hundred thousand men all armed. We are also ordered to request from you the two hundred thousand old crowns which Jacob Von Artaveld, and the chief towns of Flanders, formerly lent to king Edward of good memory at the sieges of Tournay and Calais, and which they now desire may be paid back. It is the intention of the principal towns of Flanders, that, before any thing be done in a treaty of alliance, this sum be paid down; by which means the king

of England and all his subjects may say they are friends to the Flemings, and they shall have free entrance at their pleasure into Flanders.'

"When the lords had heard this speech, they looked at each other, and some began to smile. The duke of Lancaster, addressing them, said, 'My fair lords of Flanders, what you have said requires counsel. Go and return to London, and the king will consider your requests, and send you such answers as you shall be contented with.' The Ghent men replied, 'God will it be so.' They then quitted the council-chamber, leaving the lords of the council behind; who began to laugh among themselves, and say, 'Did you notice these Flemings, and hear the request they made? They ask assistance, saying they are in very great want of it, and, besides, demand our money. It is by no means reasonable that we should pay and assist them into the bargain.' They looked on the Flemings as proud and presumptuous in thus demanding a debt of two hundred thousand old crowns of so very ancient a date as forty years.

"Nothing could have happened more opportunely for the king of France, who was eager to invade Flanders; for if the Flemings had been silent respecting these crowns, and had only requested assistance from the king of England, he would have gone in person to Flanders, or would have sent thither such a powerful force that the Fle-

mings who were in the field might have resisted the greatest power on the earth."

It appears that those who asked money from the uncles of the king of England had as little chance of success as those who would have sought it from the uncles of the king of France: "Pay what you owe," would have been an inconvenient request in either court; the fact of the debt was universally acknowledged, but the obligation to pay it was universally derided. It was, in fact, merely to avoid the fulfilment of Edward's bond, and to cheat their just creditors, that Richard's noble advisers recommended him to violate every consideration of sound policy, and abandon Flanders to the enemies of his kingdom. The French court affected to view the embassy to England as a new act of treason, and the commissioners whom Charles sent to Flanders went so far as to appeal to the cities against the proceedings of the regency. Artaveld, in reply to these insinuations, addressed a public letter to the commissioners, which deserves to be preserved as one of the most important state papers connected with this protracted war.

"Very dear and potent lords, may it please you in your noble discretion to know that we have received very amicably the letters sent us by the most excellent lord Charles king of France, informing us that your very noble lordships are come by his orders into these parts to negotiate a peace between us and the most noble prince my lord of

Flanders, and the country of Flanders; and that the king aforesaid, and his council, have authority to bring it to a conclusion; as the citizens of Tournay, our dear and good friends, testify to us by letters patent, which we have seen. Now, since the king writes to us that he is much displeased that these discords have so long continued, and still exist, we are much surprised that he should treat them so lightly; as in former times, when the town of Ghent had besieged that of Oudenarde, we, by the unanimous consent of the three great towns of Flanders, wrote to him, as to our sovereign lord, to request that he would make peace with us, but at that time he did not seem so willing to do what at this moment he is so desirous of. We have also received letters patent to say that twice you have written to us, and that you have come twice hither commissioned by the king aforesaid, as is declared in these letters patent. But it seems to us, that in our answers, which we have sent, we have clearly explained our intention respecting a treaty; which is, that we are resolved no treaty shall be entered into by us and the country of Flanders until those towns and fortresses which are shut against the towns and country of Flanders, and particularly and expressly against the good town of Ghent, of which we are regent, shall be thrown open to the will of us the regent, and the good town of Ghent; and, if this be not done as a preliminary, we shall not treat in the manner you

request. For it seems to us that the king, according to you, means to assemble a large army to assist his cousin our lord. We know and feel that there are double-dealings going forward at this time, as was the case formerly. Our intention, therefore, is to be on our sure ground, and prepared for our defence; for, if it should fall out as we expect, he will find our army ready to defend us against our enemies, and we hope, through God's assistance, to be as fortunate as formerly in gaining a victory.

"With regard to what you say of public rumour, that we, or some of our countrymen, have sought an alliance with the king of England, and that we are to be aided from thence, it is a truth that we are subjects of the crown of France, and that the king is our lord paramount, to whom we are bounden in allegiance. This we ever have performed. And even in these last days we sent him our letters, as to our sovereign lord, to entreat he would conclude a peace; to which he not only made no reply, but detained and imprisoned our messenger.

"This seems to us a blameable conduct in such a lord, and still greater in him; for we wrote to him as to our lord paramount, and he never condescended to send us any answer.

"Since, therefore, he has thus acted, we thought ourselves justified in seeking advantage for the country of Flanders from whatever persons we

pleased, which has been the cause of the embassy to England; but nothing hitherto has been concluded. The king may not, therefore, be too late, provided all the strong places shall be laid open to us. Notwithstanding he has forbidden those of Tournay, the last time they came to our army, in future to dare to carry any letters or verbal message without proper passports, yet letters and messages have been carried to Bruges and Ghent; for which reason we have imprisoned the messengers, and we will teach them not to carry such letters, that others may take warning from their example. We know well that you are seeking to sow dissensions among us, and especially against me Philip Von Artaveld, (whom God guard and preserve!) and that you wish to stir up treason where at this moment there is peace. We, therefore, warn you not to continue such practices until the before-mentioned towns be opened unto us; which, with God's help, they shall shortly be, and to whose protection we commend you.

"Written before Oudenarde, the 20th day of October, in the year 1382.

"PHILIP VON ARTAVELD, regent of Flanders."

After some negotiations, in which there was little sincerity on either side, the French king ordered a general levy throughout all his dominions, directing that they should all assemble at Arras within a limited time. "No lord of his realm disobeyed," crowds of knights and men-at-arms flock-

ed to the appointed place of rendezvous from every part of France. "The assembly of such numbers of men-at-arms was a wonderful beautiful sight. The earl of Flanders resided at Hedin, and heard daily from the king of France and the duke of Burgundy of the great levies which were making; and, in consequence, issued a proclamation throughout Artois, forbidding any one, under pain of losing his life and fortune, to withdraw anything whatever from house, fortress, or town; for he was desirous that the men-at-arms, who were marching to Artois, should have the advantage of being served with whatever was in the Low Countries."*

In fact, the French, as they arrived in Artois, lived at free quarters on the inhabitants, and never paid the wretched peasants for the waste of their substance. Charles VI. came earlier than had been anticipated; he made Arras his head-quarters, and soon had a most brilliant court collected in that city. Earl Louis exerted every art of which he was master to conciliate the favour of the king; he performed his homage for the county of Artois with more than usual humility, and the young monarch was so pleased, that he vowed to God and St. Denis that the restoration of the earl to supreme authority in Flanders should be effected at the peril of his entire kingdom. Louis replied to these gracious protestations, "I have full confidence in your majesty; and you will acquire

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 722.

such honour and glory, that, so long as the world lasts, you will be praised, for the pride of the Flemings is exceedingly great." The courtesy with which the king treated the earl was the theme of universal admiration among the knights and nobles assembled at Arras; no one seemed to remember that the young monarch was exhibiting his generosity at the expense of the chartered rights of a free people, and the lives of multitudes who had never given him any cause of offence.*

* The true view of the French king's courtesy is very pointedly expressed by the author of the drama which we have so often quoted:

Woman. There 's some have said
How that king Charles was mighty tender-hearted;
The dukes his uncles likewise; and that none
Were lother to shed blood.
Von Stockenstrom. Those burghers said it
Whom yonder gallows waits for; and, if lies
Were worthy hanging, they deserv'd their doom.
Woman.—Well, sirs, I know not.
Von Stockenstrom. Tut! King Charles, I say,
The dukes his uncles, and his councillors all,
Are of one flesh, and follow after kind.
There are humane amongst them! how humane?
Humane to lords and ladies, kings and counts.
Humane to such as we? Believe it not.
Von Whelk.—The earl of Flanders is the king's first cousin.
Von Stockenstrom.—His majesty, to show his cousin kindness,
Would canter over acres of our bodies.
His cousin is in what he calls distress;
To succour the distressed is kind and good;
So, with an army comes the good king Charles,
And, kindly to his cousin, cuts our throats.

And

A great source of the confidence felt by the Flemings was the difficulty of obtaining an entrance into their country; they were covered by the river Lys, the Scheldt, and the sea. The space between the Lys and the sea was occupied by the English county of Calais, which the French would not violate, lest Richard might be thus roused from his apathy. Artaveld's plan for the campaign was therefore limited to defending the line of the Lys, until want of provision or insurrections in the French cities should compel Charles to retreat. Every one knew, and no one better than Artaveld, the vast mass of disaffection which the cruelty and rapacity of the court and nobles had diffused throughout France, and he might therefore reasonably anticipate insurrections among the peasantry and revolts in the cities while the royal army was detained on a distant frontier. That the cause of the citizens of Ghent was popular with the burgesses of all the cities in Western Europe; and the only reason that it was not equally so with the oppressed peasantry was, that the ignorance of the rural population was just as great as their misery. Artaveld's hopes of a general movement throughout Western Europe were not therefore unreasonable;

> And that is their humanity, and such
> Is man's humanity the wide world through!
> Men's hearts you 'll find on one side soft as wax,
> Hard as the nether millstone on the other.
>
> *Philip Von Art.* ii. 159.

and his policy to protract the war until wide-spread discontent had kindled into insurrection equally extensive, was the best that could have been adopted.* All the bridges across the Lys were broken down; but, before this had been effected, a company of the earl's partisans, commanded by his natural son, had effected a passage, and commenced desolating the country. The retreat of the pillagers being cut off by the destruction of the bridges, they were surrounded and cut to pieces. This success appeared a good omen to Artaveld and the Fle-

* Mr. Henry Taylor has put into Artaveld's mouth so clear an exposition of what were most probably his sentiments, that we cannot omit the passage.

> Lo! with the chivalry of Christendom
> I wage my war; no nation for my friend,
> Yet in each nation having hosts of friends!
> The bondsmen of the world, that to their lords
> Are bound with chains of iron, unto me
> Are knit by their affections. Be it so:
> From kings and nobles will I seek no more
> Aid, friendship, nor alliance. *With the poor*
> *I make my treaty, and the heart of man*
> *Sets the broad seal of its allegiance there,*
> *And ratifies the compact.* Vassals, serfs,
> Ye that are bent with unrequited toil,
> Ye that have whitened in the dungeon's darkness
> Through years that knew not change of night and day,
> Tatterdemalions, lodgers in the hedge,
> Lean beggars with raw backs and rumbling maws,
> Whose poverty was whipp'd for starving you,
> I hail you my auxiliaries and allies,
> The only potentates whose help I crave.
>
> *Philip Von Art.* ii. 190.

mings, and inspired them with great hopes of final success.

It was now the month of November; winter was near at hand; the interference of the English was to be dreaded if the war should be protracted to another campaign. De Clisson, constable of France, was very impatient to cross the Lys; he proposed to ascend towards the source of the river, and cross where the stream was narrow: but, on further inquiry, it appeared that the upper country was covered with marshes and quagmires, which would have rendered the cavalry, the great strength of the royal army, utterly useless. It was then proposed to abandon the Lys, and attempt a passage over the Scheldt; but this would necessarily occasion much delay, and might lead to insurrections in their rear, as any appearance of retreat would give courage to the disaffected throughout France. An attempt was made to repair the bridge at Comines; but Peter du Bois,* who commanded the Flemings on the opposite bank, kept so vigilant a watch, that this enterprise was soon abandoned.

Whilst the constable was in this perplexity, some knights of the van-guard, having obtained some boats from Lille, crossed the river a little below Comines, and made a lodgment in an underwood of stunted elder bushes, which concealed their proceedings from the enemy. The baron of Sempy

* His Flemish name is Van den Bosche; but we have preserved the French form, as that by which he is best known in history.

and the marshal of Sancerre received orders to take advantage of this favourable event, and transport a strong reconnoitring party across the river, whilst the constable with his crossbow-men made a false attack on the bridge of Comines. Sempy was a native of Artois; he had been long versed in the Flemish wars, and was well acquainted with the country. Under his guidance the detachment arrived at a position in front of Comines, which they occupied without meeting any resistance. The constable, who saw this manœuvre from the opposite bank, was filled with terror; he believed that the detachment must inevitably be cut to pieces; and such, no doubt, would have been their fate had they been promptly attacked by Peter du Bois. The Flemings, however, resolved not to engage until the following morning; believing that the detachment had been sent over merely to divert their attention from the bridge of Comines. In fact, Peter du Bois mistook the false attack for the real, and the real for the false.

During the night, the French who had crossed the river erected a tolerable entrenchment of palisades and *abattis*, while their brethren on the opposite bank collected materials for repairing the bridge of Comines. In order to perplex the Flemings, and lead them to believe that a much greater number had crossed, Sempy directed his men to raise, at distant points, the war-cries of the different nobles who served in the French army.

Peter du Bois was deceived by this artifice; he led out the greater part of his forces early in the following morning, hoping to surprise the French in their sleep. Sempy had anticipated this movement, and formed his detachment into a phalanx ready for action at a moment's notice. It was the Flemings who were surprised. In the very onset Peter du Bois was severely wounded and compelled to quit the field: a sorceress or fortune-teller, who had persuaded the people of Comines that her enchantments would secure them the victory, and was therefore entrusted with the charge of the banner of the town, was slain about the same time; and her loss produced such an effect on the superstitious Flemings, that they began to give way before their handful of opponents. In the mean time, the knights in the constable's army made the most vigorous efforts to repair the bridge of Comines. Many offered their shields to supply the deficiency of planks, others cut down brushwood with their swords; and two waggon-loads of hurdles, which arrived at the critical moment, enabled them to open the passage. Knights, nobles, archers, and men-at-arms impetuously rushed over the bridge before its repairs were completed: many were drowned; but those who made good their footing fell furiously on the feeble garrison of Comines, and drove them from the town, just as their brethren, disheartened by the loss of their leader and standard-bearer, had begun to give way before Sempy's

detachment. The Flemings no longer thought of resistance, but fled on the road to Bruges; Comines and its rich plunder were abandoned to the French; and the constable took advantage of the golden opportunity to repair the bridge of Comines so completely, that the army could pass over without any difficulty. Charles VI. and his whole force crossed the bridge in triumph; and such was the moral effect produced by this success, that the citizens of Ypres, without waiting to be summoned, sent deputies to propose terms of capitulation. "The king of France, following the good advice which was given him, to gain the country by gentle means, and not wishing to show any ill-will, received them kindly, and accepted their offer, on condition that their town should pay forty thousand francs, to defray the smaller expenses which this expedition had hitherto cost." *

When those of the castlewicks of Cassel, Bergues, Bourbourg, Gravelines, Furnes, Dunkerque, Poperingue, Tourront, Vaillant, and Malines had heard that the men of Ypres had surrendered and put themselves under the obedience of the king of France, who had graciously pardoned them, they began to be much alarmed. After these towns had well considered the business, the inhabitants seized their governors, whom Philip Von Artaveld had put over them, and having bound them strongly, so that they could not escape, led them to the king on Mount Ypres,

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 169.

in order to please him and to appease his anger. On their arrival they cast themselves on their knees, and said, "Noble king, we put our lives, towns, and fortunes under your obedience, and wish them so to remain. In order to show that we regard you as our true lord, here are the governors whom Philip Von Artaveld had set over us; for by force, and not otherwise, has he made us obey him. You may do your pleasure with them, for they have governed us according to their wills." The king was advised by his lords to grant his pardon to all these towns; on condition, however, that they should pay him, as part of his expenses in this war, sixty thousand francs. All the provisions were to be given up, and whatever cattle might be found in the fields; but they were assured that their towns would neither be burnt nor pillaged. This was very satisfactory to them, and they greatly thanked the king and his council. They were much rejoiced on finding they had escaped so well; but the governors of Philip Von Artaveld, who had been carried thither, were beheaded on the bridge of Ypres.

Bruges would probably have imitated the example of desertion, had not Artaveld held many of the citizens hostages for its fidelity. Peter du Bois, though scarcely recovered from his wounds, was governor of this important city, and he inspired the friends of freedom with a confidence in final success which he could scarcely have felt himself. Artaveld had still high hopes. He collected to-

gether the forces of every city which remained faithful to the League, confident that, if he could again recover the line of the Lys, every misfortune would be retrieved. The two armies soon drew near each other, both having encamped close to West Rossebeke, or Rosebecque, a little village between Ypres and Courtray.

On the eve of the battle Philip Von Artaveld gave a great supper to his principal captains; he spoke with full assurance of their success on the following day, exhorting them to surpass all their former exertions, as they were about to contend, not only for their own liberties, but for those of all Europe. After supper each returned to his tent; and the chroniclers have taken pains to record that Artaveld shared his tent with a fair damsel of Ghent, who was so fondly attached to him that she would not retire to a place of safety from the chances of battle. Whilst Philip slept, the lady went out from the tent about midnight to examine the sky; either because she pretended to some knowledge of judicial astrology, or from mere curiosity to ascertain the state of the weather. As she looked towards Rosebecque, she thought that she saw smoke and sparks ascending to the sky, from fires kindled by the French; while, at the same time, she seemed to hear the various war-cries of the French rising from Mont d'Or, an eminence between the Flemish camp and Rosebecque. She communicated her observations to

Artaveld: he rushed from his tent, and seemed to witness the same sights and sounds.* The trumpets were immediately blown, and the Flemings were getting under arms, when the captains of the guard declared, that, having witnessed the phenomena, they had sent out videttes to examine the country, who had reported on their return that all was quiet. Great speculation was excited by this singular appearance: "Some said it was the devils of hell running and dancing about the place where the battle was to be fought, for the abundance of prey they expected."†

In the French camp the night was spent in making arrangements for the battle, and providing for the personal security of the young king. A detachment of the bravest knights had been formed to surround him as a body-guard; and it was proposed

* *Elena.*—Arouse yourself, Von Artaveld, awake!
Artaveld (awaking).—Elena, love, fly, fly!—what is the matter?
Elena.—Nay, start not; it is only my surmise:
But I could deem the Frenchman was a-foot.
Artaveld.—Why think you so?—Van Ryk! what, ho! Van Ryk!
Elena.—I could not sleep, and sat without the tent,
And sudden from the river seemed to rise
A din of battle, mixed with lengthened shouts
That sounded hollow, like a windy thaw.
I looked, and in the clouded western sky
There was a glow of red, and then the cries
Were less confused; and I believed I heard
"Mount-Joye!"—"St. Denis!"—"Flanders and the Lion!"
With that I came to waken you.
Philip Von Art. ii. 247.

† Froissart, ut antè, i. 740.

that the constable, De Clisson, should resign the conduct of the battle, and attend only to the safety of his royal master. Charles had sufficient magnanimity to reject this arrangement; and the constable, to his great joy, was allowed to remain at the head of the army.

Froissart's account of the battle of Rosebecque can neither be improved nor abridged; it is the most complete picture of the art of war in the middle ages which we possess, and there is deep interest even in its most minute details:

"On the Thursday morning all the men-at-arms of the army, the van-guard, the rear-guard, and the king's battalion, armed themselves completely, except their helmets, as if they were about to engage; for the lords well knew the day could not pass without a battle, from the reports of the foragers on the Wednesday evening, who had seen the Flemings on their march demanding a battle.

"The king of France heard mass, as did the other lords, who all devoutly prayed to God that the day might turn out to their honour. In the morning there was a thick mist, which continued so long that no one could see the distance of an acre: the lords were much vexed at this, but they could not remedy it.

"After the king's mass, which had been attended by the constable and other great lords, it was ordered that those valiant knights, Sir Oliver de

Clisson, constable of France, Sir John de Vienne, admiral of France, and Sir William de Poitiers, bastard of Langres, who had been long used to arms, should reconnoitre the position of the Flemings, and report to the king and his uncles the truth of it; during which time the lord d'Albreth and Sir Hugh de Châtillon were employed in forming the battalions. These three knights, leaving the king, set off on the flower of their steeds, and rode towards that part where they thought they should find the Flemings, and towards the spot where they had encamped the preceding night. You must know, that on the Thursday morning, when the thick mist came on, the Flemings having, as you have before heard, marched before daybreak to this strong position, had there remained until about eight o'clock, when, not seeing nor hearing anything of the French, their numbers excited in them pride and self-sufficiency, and their captains, as well as others, began thus to talk among themselves: 'What are we about, thus standing still, and almost frozen with cold? Why do we not advance with courage, since such is our inclination, and seek our enemies to combat them? We remain here to no purpose, for the French will never come to look for us. Let us at least march to Mont d'Or, and take advantage of the mountain.' Many such speeches were made, and they all consented to march to Mont d'Or, which was between them and the French.

In order to avoid the ditch in their front, they turned the grove and entered the plain. Whilst they were thus on their march round the grove, the three knights came so opportunely that they reconnoitred them at their ease, and rode by the side of their battalions, which were again formed within a bow-shot from them.

"When they had considered them on the left, they did the same on the right, and thus carefully and fully examined them. The Flemings saw them plainly, but paid not any attention to them, nor did any one quit his ranks. The three knights were well mounted, and so much used to their business that they cared not for them. Philip said to his captains, 'Our enemies are near at hand; let us draw up here in battle-array for the combat. I have seen strong appearances of their intentions; for these three horsemen who pass and repass have reconnoitred us, and are still doing so.' Upon this, the Flemings halted on the Mont d'Or, and formed one thick and strong battalion; when Philip said aloud, 'Gentlemen, when the attack begins, remember our enemies were defeated and broken at the battle of Bruges by our keeping in a compact body. Be careful not to open your ranks, but let every man strengthen himself as much as possible, and bear his staff right before him. You may intermix your arms, so that no one may break you, and march straight forward with

a good step, without turning to the right or left; and act together, so that, when the conflict begins, you may throw your bombards, and shoot with your cross-bows, in such manner that our enemies may be thunderstruck with surprise.' When Philip had formed his men in battle-array and told them how they were to act, he went to the wing of his army, in which he had the greatest confidence. Near him was his page on his courser, to whom he said, 'Go wait for me at the bush out of bow-shot, and when thou shalt see the discomfiture of the French, and the pursuit begin, bring me my horse, and shout my cry; they will make way for thee to come to me, for I wish to be first in the pursuit.' The page, on these words, left his master, and did as he had ordered him. Philip placed near him, on the side of this wing, forty English archers whom he had in his pay.

"Now, if it be considered how well Philip had arranged this business, I am of opinion, and in this I am joined by several others, that he well knew the art of war; but in one instance which I will relate he acted wrong. It was in quitting the first strong position he had taken in the morning; for they would never have sought to fight him there, as it would have been too much to their disadvantage: but he wished to show that his people were men of courage, and had little fear of their enemies.

"The three knights returned to the king of France and his battalions, which had already been formed, and were marching slowly in order of battle; for there were many prudent and brave men, who had long been accustomed to arms, in the van-guard in the king's battalion and in the rear-guard, who knew well what they were to do, for they were the flower of chivalry in Christendom. Way was made for them, and the lord of Clisson spoke first, bowing to the king from his horse, and taking off the beaver he wore, saying, 'Sire, rejoice: these people are our own, and our lusty varlets will fight well with them.' — 'Constable,' replied the king, 'God assist you! Now advance in the name of God and St. Denis.' The knights of the king's body-guard now drew up in disciplined rank. The king created many new knights, as did different lords in their battalions, so that several new banners were displayed.

"It was ordered, that, when the engagement was about to commence, the battalion of the king with the Oriflamme of France should march to the front of the army; that the van and rear-guard should form the two wings as speedily as possible, and by this means inclose and straiten the Flemings, who were drawn up in the closest order, and gain a great advantage over them. Notice of this intended movement was sent to the rear-guard, of which the count d'Eu, the count de Blois, the count de St. Pol, the count de Harcourt, the

count de Châtillon, and the lord de la Frie, were commanders. The young lord de Haurel displayed his banner this day before the count de Blois, who also knighted Sir Thomas d'Istre, and the bastard Sir James de Hameth. According to the report of the heralds, there were this day created four hundred and sixty-seven knights.

"The lord de Clisson, Sir John de Vienne, and Sir William de Langres, having made their report to the king, left him and went to their post in the van-guard. Shortly afterwards, the Oriflamme was displayed by Sir Peter de Villiers, who bore it. Some say (as they find it written), that it was never before displayed against Christians, and that it was a matter of great doubt during the march whether it should be displayed or not. However, the matter having been fully considered, they resolved to display it, because the Flemings followed opinions contrary to that of pope Clement, and called themselves Urbanists; for which the French said they were rebellious, and out of the pale of the church. This was the principal cause why it had been brought and displayed in Flanders.

"The Oriflamme was a most excellent banner, and had been sent from heaven with great mystery; it is a sort of gonfanon, and it is of much comfort in the day of battle to those who see it. Proof was made of its virtues at this time, for all the morning there was so thick a fog that with diffi-

culty could they see each other; but the moment the knight had displayed it, and raised his lance in the air, this fog instantly dispersed, and the sky was as clear as it had been during the whole year. The lords of France were much rejoiced when they saw this clear sky, and the sun shine so that they could look about them on all sides.

"It was a fine sight to view these banners, helmets, and beautiful emblazoned arms. The army kept a dead silence, not uttering a sound, but eyed the large battalion of Flemings before them, who were marching in a compact body with their staves advanced in the air, which looked like spears; and so great was their numbers, that they looked like a wood. The lord d'Estonnenort told me that he saw (as well as several others), when the Oriflamme was displayed, and the fog had dispersed, a white dove fly many times round the king's battalion. When it had made several circles, and the engagement was about to begin, it perched on one of the king's banners: this was considered as a fortunate omen.

"The Flemings advanced so near that they commenced a cannonade with bars of iron headed with brass. Thus was the battle begun by Philip and his men against the king's battalion, which at the outset was very sharp; for the Flemings, inflamed with pride and courage, came on with vigour, and, pushing with shoulders and breasts like enraged wild-boars, they were so strongly

interlaced one with another, that they could not be broken nor their ranks forced. By this attack of cannons and bombards the lord d'Albarnin, banneret, Morlet de Harnin, and James Doré, on the side of the French, were first slain, and the king's battalion obliged to fall back; but the van and rear-guards pushed forward, and, by enclosing the Flemings, straitened them much. Upon the two wings these men-at-arms made their attack, and with their well-tempered lances of Bordeaux pierced through their coats of mail to the flesh. All who were assailed by them drew back to avoid the blows, for never would those that escaped return to the combat. By this means the Flemings were so straitened that they could not use their staves to defend themselves; they lost both strength and breath, and, falling upon one another, were stifled to death without striking a blow.

"Philip Von Artaveld was surrounded, wounded by spears, and beaten down, with numbers of the Ghent men, who were his guards. When Philip's page saw the ill-success of his countrymen, being well-mounted on his courser, he set out and left his master, for he could not give him any assistance, and returned towards Courtray on his way to Ghent.

"When the Flemings found themselves enclosed on two sides, there was an end to the business, for they could not assist each other.

The king's battalion, which had been somewhat disordered at the beginning, now recovered. The men-at-arms knocked down the Flemings with all their might. They had well-sharpened battle-axes, with which they cut through helmets and disbrained heads; others gave such blows with leaden maces, that nothing could withstand them. Scarcely were the Flemings overthrown before the pillagers advanced, who, mixing with the men-at-arms, made use of the large knives they carried, and finished slaying whoever fell into their hands, without more mercy than if they had been so many dogs. The clattering on the helmets by the axes and leaden maces was so loud, that nothing else could be heard for the noise. I was told, that if all the armourers of Paris and Bruxelles had been there, working at their trade, they could not have made a greater noise than these combatants did on the helmets of their enemies; for they struck them with all their force, and set to their work with the greatest good-will. Some, indeed, pressed too forward into the crowd, and were surrounded and slain; in particular, Sir Louis de Gonsalz, a knight from Berry, and Sir Fleton de Reniel. There were several more, which was a great pity: but in such a battle as this, where such numbers were engaged, it is not possible for victory to be obtained without being dearly bought; for young knights and squires, eager to gain renown, willingly run into perils in hopes of honour.

"The crowd was now so great, and so dangerous for those enclosed in it, that the men-at-arms, if not instantly assisted, could not raise themselves when once down. By this were several of the French killed and smothered; but they were not many, for, when in danger, they helped each other. There was a large and high mount of the Flemings who were slain; but never was there seen so little blood spilt at so great a battle, where such numbers were killed.

"When those in the rear saw the front fail, and that they were defeated, they were greatly astonished, and began to throw away their staves and armour, to disband and fly towards Courtray and other places, not having any care but to save themselves if possible. The Bretons and French pursued them into ditches, alder-groves, and heaths, were they fought with and slew them. Numbers were killed in the pursuit between the field of battle and Courtray, whither they were flying in their way to Ghent."*

Thus, on the 27th of November, 1382, was gained the battle of Rosebecque, which saved from destruction the feudal aristocracy of Western Europe. The nobles exhibited cruelty proportionate to the extent of the danger from which they felt they had escaped: not more than nine thousand Flemings fell in the battle, but twenty-five thousand were mercilessly slaughtered in the pursuit. Charles offered a reward to any one who should

* Froissart, ut antè, i. 745.

bring him Artaveld, dead or alive: a wounded servant of the fallen hero was raised from the ground to aid in the search; he pointed out the body amid a heap of the slain; it was carried before the king's pavilion; and, after Charles and his lords had gratified their curiosity by turning over the body of the famous regent of Flanders, they ordered it to be hanged on a tree. The king ordered the wounds of the servant, by whose aid the body was found, to be bound up; but he tore away the bandages, and refused to survive his beloved master.

From the field of battle the French marched to Courtray, which was pillaged and burned to the ground in spite of the remonstrances of the earl of Flanders, who now saw that he was likely to be restored only to reign in a desert. To avert such a calamity from Bruges, he sent secretly to the inhabitants, offering to mediate between them and the king; and at the same time employed the influence of the duke of Burgundy to incline Charles to accept a capitulation. Some monks, delegated from Bruges, came to the royal camp: the king graciously listened to their appeal, but informed them that it was necessary to satisfy his followers, who were exulting in the anticipation of the rich plunder of the city. After some deliberation, the amount of ransom was fixed at one hundred and twenty thousand francs; after which, the city was taken under the king's protection.

Violent indignation was expressed by the cheva-

liers of Brittany, and other rapacious adventurers in the royal camp, at the mercy extended to Bruges. They declared that they had not derived anything like the profit from this war which they had been led to expect, and they resolved to pay themselves by plundering the county of Hainault, under pretence that the earl had not given sufficient assistance to his cousin of Flanders. It was with the utmost difficulty that the count de Blois, and some other nobles connected with the earl of Hainault, could divert these rapacious mutineers from their atrocious designs. Scarcely was this difficulty arranged when another arose. The lord of Dixmude, a noble of Flanders, had what he deemed a legitimate cause of quarrel against the city of Valenciennes. The magistrates of that town had hanged a relative of the noble lord for several acts of pillage and murder; an opportunity for revenge was now offered, the knights of France declaring that they were ready to exact heavy vengeance from those citizens who had been so daring as to bring a man of noble birth to justice. The count de Blois again interfered; and, by threatening that he would hold Dixmude responsible for the consequences, induced him to abandon his project.

Whilst the French were thus wasting precious time, Peter du Bois returned to Ghent and revived the courage of the citizens. They indeed sent deputies to treat with the conquerors, but they came not as suppliants; on the contrary, they demanded, as the price

of their submission, to be delivered for ever from the power of their earl, and to become immediately dependent on the king and the parliament of Paris. Such terms were of course not likely to find acceptance from a council in which the duke of Burgundy, heir to the earldom of Flanders, had a preponderating influence. The people of Ghent, indeed, appear to have merely intended to gain time; for they not only refused to recognize the pope of Avignon, but declared that they would not consent to have his claims taken into consideration. In consequence of this step, the war in Flanders became connected with the great schism of the West; and the insurgents had reason to hope that the religious sympathies of those who adhered to the Italian pope—that is, of nearly all Christendom, with the exception of France,—would be roused in their favour.

In the mean time, the increasing severity of the season and the repeated mutinies in the French camp rendered it necessary for the king to bring the campaign to a close, without attempting to lay siege to Ghent. He dismissed most of his forces, but kept the Bretons and Normans; for he was resolved to punish the turbulence of the Parisians, over whom, not less than over the Flemings, he had gained the victory of Rosebecque. He entered his metropolis, as if it had been a conquered city, at the head of his army: the gates of Paris were torn from their hinges; the barricades which secured the principal

streets were thrown down; the citizens were compelled to surrender all their weapons, offensive and defensive; all who had rendered themselves in any way obnoxious to the government were thrown into prison; those who were wealthy were permitted to ransom their lives, but the poor were delivered in droves to the executioner. Vexatious taxes of every possible kind were levied on the unfortunate Parisians, and every one who ventured to utter a complaint was mercilessly butchered. The other cities which had shown any desire for freedom were treated with similar severity; and, in fact, France felt more sensibly the consequences of the victory of Rosebecque than Flanders itself.

We must now have recourse to Froissart for the history of a new change in the aspect of the Flemish war, arising out of the rival claims to the papacy by Urban of Rome and Clement of Avignon.

"About this period, he who signed himself pope Urban the sixth came from Rome to Genoa by sea, where he was grandly received, and fixed his seat there. You have heard how all England was obedient to him, both church and commonalty, and now more than ever. Because the king of France and that nation were Clementists, Urban (whom the English and several other countries obeyed), during his residence at Genoa, sought how he could obtain succours from England to annoy the king of France; and I will tell you by what means. He

was to send his bulls to the archbishops and bishops of the country, to proclaim that he absolved, and would absolve, from all crime or fault, every one who would assist in the destruction of the Clementists. He had heard that his adversary Clement had resorted to this means in France, and was daily doing so; and that the French called the Urbanists, as to matters of faith, dogs, which those retorted back on the Clementists, whom Urban was very desirous of condemning to the utmost of his power; and he knew he had no other means of hurting but through the English. It was necessary, however, that he should have a considerable sum of ready money, if he wished to put his plans into execution; for it was well known that the nobles of England would not, for all the absolutions in the world, undertake any expeditions unless such were preceded by offers of money. Men-at-arms cannot live on pardons, nor do they pay much attention to them except at the point of death.

"He therefore determined, that, with the bulls he sent to England for the prelates to preach upon, he would order a full tenth to be raised by the church, and to be paid by them to the nobility, without affecting the king's treasury, or oppressing the common people.

"This he imagined would be agreeable to the knights and barons of England. He instantly hastened the writing and engrossing his bulls, as well to the king as to his uncles and the prelates of

England, with his pardons and absolutions from all crimes; he granted, besides, to the king and his uncles a full tenth to be by them raised and levied throughout the kingdom, on which he enlarged very much.

"And because all these sums were to come from the church, he would have a churchman command the expedition. The Lord Henry Spencer, bishop of Norwich, was appointed, that the commonalty and churches might have greater faith in it. In addition to this, because he knew that the king of Spain was contrary to his interest, and much allied with the king of France, he declared, that, with the money which should be raised in England, the duke of Lancaster, who in right of his wife called himself king of Castille, should set out for that country to raise a similar army there; and, if the duke of Lancaster would undertake this expedition with a powerful force of men-at-arms, he would grant to the king of Portugal (who had just commenced a war with Don John of Castille) a full tenth on the whole kingdom of Portugal. In this manner was Urban active in his concerns. He sent upwards of thirty bulls to England, where they were received with much joy. The prelates preached up in their dioceses this expedition in the manner of a crusade; and the people of England, who were credulous enough, believed it too readily; so that none of either sex thought they should end the year happily, nor have any chance of entering

paradise, if they did not give handsomely to the expedition as pure alms. At London, and in that diocese, there was collected a large Gascony tun full of money; and he who gave most, according to the pope's bull, gained the greatest number of pardons. All who should die at this time, and who had given their money, were absolved from every fault; and, by the tenor of the bull, happy were they who could now die, in order to obtain so noble an absolution. They collected, during the winter and ensuing Lent, throughout England, as well by alms as by the tenth by the church, for everything was received; and they so cheerfully taxed themselves, that the sum of twenty-five hundred thousand francs was amassed."*

Early in April 1363, the bishop of Norwich arrived in Calais at the head of a fine English army; he remained for some time expecting orders from England; but, as none came, he resolved to march into Flanders to punish the earl for the wrongs he had inflicted on the English merchants in Bruges, and the declaration he had made in favour of the pope of Avignon. Earl Louis was not a little alarmed by the approach of the warlike prelate; he sent deputies to remonstrate against the invasion of Flanders as a neutral country, and at the same time he directed his natural son, commonly called "the bastard of Flanders," to assemble an army near Dunkirk. To the remonstrances of

* Froissart, vol. i. chap. cxxxi.

the deputies the bishop replied, that he regarded Flanders as a recent acquisition of the great enemies of England, the king of France and the duke of Burgundy; he then directed his march towards Dunkirk, where the earl's forces had already collected in considerable strength. Several volunteers from Ghent joined the English on their march, and would have commenced the engagement the moment that they came in sight of the enemy, had not the bishop insisted that a herald should first be sent to demand for what cause they appeared in arms, and to which pope they adhered? This preliminary appears not to have been understood by the Flemings; they pulled the herald from his horse, and murdered him on the spot, before he could deliver his message. Such a breach of the law of arms was not to be borne: the English archers immediately advanced and opened a heavy fire of cloth-yard shafts on their adversaries, which in a short time threw their lines into the greatest disorder; the men-at-arms then charged with so much spirit, that they reached the gates of Dunkirk before they could be closed by the fugitives. The battle and the town were won together, and more than three-fourths of the earl's army fell. This great slaughter was principally owing to the volunteers from Ghent; they pursued the partisans of the earl with unswerving fury, and avenged to the utmost of their power the refusal of quarter to their brethren at Rosebecque. Great was the

consternation of the earl of Flanders at receiving the intelligence of this battle; it seemed to him as if this war, "never-ending, still-beginning," was about to be renewed under the auspices of the English, and that the ultimate recovery of Flanders was now more distant than ever. The duke of Burgundy shared these feelings; he made no attempt to meet the bishop of Norwich in the field, but contented himself with strengthening the garrisons in the towns on the gallant prelate's probable line of march.

Instead of advancing directly upon Bruges, which would without doubt have immediately opened its gates, the bishop of Norwich attacked and subdued several places of minor importance, where his men obtained considerable booty; after which, he laid siege to Ypres. In this enterprize the English were joined by large reinforcements from Ghent, and several of the most distinguished among the surviving leaders of the insurgents raised troops of volunteers to renew the war with more spirit than ever. A body of men-at-arms, sent by the duke of Burgundy to reinforce the garrison of Courtray, was met by the English and Flemish confederates, routed with great loss, and the fugitives pursued almost to the gates of Lille.

Earl Louis, fearing that the duke of Burgundy would not be able to bring him relief with sufficient promptitude, requested the mediation of the prince-bishop of Liege, who, like the English,

was a supporter of the Italian pope, Urban; and offered, if the bishop of Norwich evacuated Flanders, to assist him with a considerable force against the Clementists in any other part of Europe. The confederates received the bishop of Liege with all possible respect, but they disregarded his proffered mediation, which they not unreasonably suspected of insincerity. After many vain efforts the prince-bishop returned home, having previously declared to the earl that nothing was to be expected from negotiations.

The duke of Burgundy was now convinced that all the former advantages gained by himself and his father would be perilled unless the king of France once more took the field at the head of an army as powerful as that which had produced such decisive effects in the former campaign. An assembly of the princes, nobles, and barons of France was convened at Compiègne, and there it was resolved that all the forces of the kingdom should assemble at Arras in the August of 1383. Ypres resisted all the efforts of the English until the approach of the French compelled them to raise the siege. The bishop of Norwich was quite unprepared for such a vast superiority of force as the French brought into the field: he retired to Bergues; but, finding that town incapable of defence, he continued his retreat to Bourbourg, while Bergues was pillaged and burned by the royal army. To compensate for this loss, Ac-

kerman, one of the bravest of the surviving Ghent captains, surprised Oudenarde with a body of four hundred men, and made himself master of this strong place, though his forces did not equal those of the garrison. When this intelligence reached the royal camp, it rendered the French anxious to conclude the negotiations which they had commenced with the English garrison in Bourbourg. In opposition to the great majority of the council, the English were allowed to evacuate the town with all their arms, baggage, and munitions of war. This greatly irritated the Bretons and the Normans: in defiance of the capitulation, they attacked and robbed the stragglers from the English rear; but their vengeance was principally directed against Bourbourg, which they were permitted to pillage at their discretion. The churches were not spared by these plunderers; a knight of Brittany, endeavouring to tear a jewel from a crown that decorated a statue of the Virgin Mary, happened to lose his hold, and, falling heavily on the floor of the church with his weighty armour, was killed on the spot. A second soldier attempted to gain the same prize, but he had no sooner touched the statue than all the bells in the town began to ring. A cry that the Virgin had miraculously interfered to save her shrine was raised; superstition, more influential than mercy, checked the outrages of the soldiers: news of the prodigies was brought to the king; he proceeded to the church, accompanied by his principal lords,

and made rich offerings at the shrine of the Virgin to avert her wrath.

A great revolution was effected in the mind of the French king when he was persuaded that the saints looked upon burghers and artisans as human beings, and that the Virgin Mary herself took some interest in their welfare; he manifested such strong inclination for peace that his uncles consented to his wishes. A meeting between the several belligerent powers was held between Calais and Boulogne: the duke of Lancaster, who was at the head of the English negotiators, made every exertion to have a firm peace concluded, but there were so many jarring interests to be arranged, that this was impossible; it was, however, agreed that there should be a truce for a year between England and France and the allies of both, all parties retaining the towns and castles of which they were actually in possession. Earl Louis exerted all his influence to have Ghent excluded from the benefit of this pacification: but the duke of Lancaster, who had been born in that city, declared that the honour of England was pledged to Ghent; and he was supported by the duke of Berry, who did not hesitate to declare that the war in Flanders had been provoked by the injustice and misconduct of its ruler.

Earl Louis was so mortified by this disappointment, that he sickened and died; some authors, however, attribute his death to a wound which he

received from the duke of Berry when Louis demanded homage from him for the county of Boulogne. He left only one legitimate child, Margaret duchess of Burgundy, to inherit the earldom, which was now annexed to Burgundy, and rendered the duke the richest prince in Europe.

War was renewed at the expiration of the truce, but was conducted with little vigour on either side. The duke of Burgundy was disposed to adopt conciliatory measures; the leaders of the democracy were not disinclined to obey a sovereign whose fame for wisdom and valour was spread through Europe. Even the landed aristocracy began to long for the return of tranquillity: in the course of the war they had been practically taught that the despised burghers were often more than a match for their choicest chivalry; their lands were lying waste, and they had reason to fear a return of the French army,—for the Bretons and Normans were not very discriminating in their plunder, and robbed the loyal as well as the revolted. They had also found that cities in an invasion had several chances of escape, but that the ruin of villages and country-seats is inevitable. When such pacific dispositions were formed, it only wanted some person of sufficient courage to encounter the unpopularity of proposing a treaty.

We must turn to the venerable historian, from whom we have drawn very largely the most picturesque incidents of the war, for an equally gra-

phic account of the circumstances which led to peace:

"I will detail how a peace was made between them and the duke of Burgundy, as minutely as I have before related the cause of the war, which originated in the hatreds of Gilbert Mathew, John Hyons, and their accomplices; and I shall beg you will have the goodness to attend to me. At the time I am now speaking of, the lord Bourchier governed the city of Ghent for the king of England; and Peter du Bois assisted him in maintaining his authority, and retaining the affections of the wicked. There were several prudent men that were disgusted with such dissensions, and who had suffered much from them; they dared not open themselves to each other but in secret, for, if Peter du Bois heard that any person was desirous of peace, he was put to death without mercy: in like manner he and Philip Von Artaveld had slain Sir Simon Bete and Sir Gilbert Gente; and latterly, in order to frighten the town of Ghent, they had destroyed many of the inhabitants.

"When Francis Atremen had been driven from the town of Damme by the king of France,—who, having totally burnt and destroyed the Quatre Mestiers, was returned to France, as it has been before related,—the principal persons of Ghent supposed the king would, the ensuing summer, return before that town with a very powerful army. Peter du Bois and those of his party were unwilling to be-

lieve it; adding, that they should be very glad to see the king come thither, for they had formed such strong alliances with the king of England as to be certain of assistance. At this time there were in Ghent two valiant men of good life and conversation, of moderate birth and fortune, neither of the highest nor the richest, who were very much vexed at this war against its natural lord the duke of Burgundy, but were afraid openly to declare their sentiments, from the examples which had been made by Peter du Bois. One of them was a mariner; the other, the most considerable butcher in the market, named James d'Ardembourg. By these two men was the business first brought about. In addition to them, I must include a worthy knight of Flanders, named Sir John d'Elle, a prudent intelligent man, who interested himself much in this affair; but, if it had not been through the means of the two afore-mentioned persons, he would not have interfered in it so happily, nor, as may easily be believed, could all the knights of Flanders have succeeded.

"Sir John d'Elle was much beloved by many in the town of Ghent, and he went in and out at his pleasure without being suspected by any one. At the beginning he was afraid of talking either about war or peace, nor would he ever have done so if it had not been previously mentioned by Roger de Cremin and James d'Ardembourg; and I will tell you how it happened.

"These two were much displeased at the continued troubles in Flanders, in so much that they conversed together on the subject; when Roger said to James, 'Whoever could interfere between this our native town of Ghent, which is so much oppressed, and the duke of Burgundy, our natural lord, would be a deed of great charity, and acquire by it grace from God and praise from men, for the differences and confusions which are so unbecoming would by this means be put an end to.'

"'You speak truly, Roger,' replied James, 'but it will be a difficult and dangerous thing to do, on account of Peter du Bois: no one dares talk of peace, for fear of him; for, if he knew of it, those who had meddled in the business would instantly be put to death.'—'What!' said Roger, 'shall things then remain always as they are? There must be an end to it.'—'Tell me how,' answered James, 'and I will cheerfully listen to you.' Roger replied, 'You are the principal butcher in the market, the richest, and most respected: you can talk secretly and boldly with your most confidential friends and brethren in trade; and, when you shall find they understand you, by degrees you can draw them more forward. I, on the other hand, who am a mariner, and well-beloved by all sorts of people, whose courage I know, and who hate the war, for they have lost much by it, will remonstrate with some of them on the subject, and they will induce others to incline the same way. When we shall have gained over

these two trades, which are numerous and powerful, the other trades and honest people who wish for peace will join us.'—'Very well,' said James, 'I will sound my people, do you the same by yours.'

"Each of them performed his promise; and they discoursed so prudently with their friends on the subject, that, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, James d'Ardembourg found all his brother butchers well inclined to his way of thinking. Roger, on the other hand, with his eloquence brought the mariners, who were anxious to regain the pilotage they had been so long deprived of, to the same opinion.

"When these two honest men were conversing on the business, and had shown how desirous they had found their people to obtain peace, they said, 'We want a proper person to represent our situation to the duke of Burgundy;' and instantly thought on Sir John d'Elle, on whom they determined to call, as he was then in the town. This they did, and loyally told him their whole secret, saying, 'Sir John, we have so effectually worked on our brethren of the trade, they are all eager for peace, but on condition that my lord of Burgundy will engage to pardon every one, and keep to us our ancient privileges, for which we can show sealed charters.' Sir John replied, 'You say well, and I will cheerfully negotiate the matter between you.'

"The knight waited on the duke of Burgundy,

who at the time was in France with the king, and related to him all he had heard. He demonstrated so well the advantages of the business, that the duke willingly listened to his proposals.

"In truth, he was desirous of peace with Ghent, on account of the intended expedition which he wished the king to make against England. His own council advised it, as did Sir Guy de la Trimouille, Sir John de Vienne, and also the constable of France and the lord de Coucy. He therefore told the knight he would assent to the terms proposed, and that he might return with his answer to those who had sent him.

"The duke inquired if Francis Atremen had been present when this matter was brought forward. He said, 'No, my lord; he is governor of the castle of Gaure, and I know not if those who have sent me would like he should be made acquainted with the business.'—'Tell them,' answered the duke, 'to speak to him boldly on the subject; he will not do anything in opposition, for I understand he most earnestly wishes to make his peace with me.' The knight returned to Ghent with this good news, with which they were well pleased. He then went to the castle of Gaure to Francis Atremen, when he opened the whole matter to him, but under secrecy. Francis, having paused a little, replied gaily, 'Since my lord of Burgundy is willing to pardon everything, and to secure to the town of Ghent its privileges, I

will no longer be a rebel, but endeavour by all means to obtain my peace.'

"The knight left Francis Atremen at Gaure, and returned to the duke of Burgundy in France with the account how matters stood. The duke heard him with pleasure, and wrote very amicable letters to those of Ghent, sealed with his seal: and on this issue of the treaty the knight went back to Flanders and to Ghent, but he did not carry thither his letters; he, however, gave such assurance to Roger Cremin and James d'Ardembourg that he had them to produce, as to lead them to consider the affair as good as settled. Now, consider what great peril these men and the knight were in; for, if the lord Bourchier or Peter du Bois had known of it, their lives would have paid the forfeit."*

The exertions made to induce the people of Ghent to consent to peace were soon made known to Peter du Bois and lord Bourchier, the English ambassador. They resolved to counteract them by holding a meeting of their partisans; but Cremin and Ardembourg, having received intimation of their designs, assembled the friends of peace in such numbers that the English party was overawed, and the vote for opening negotiations with the duke passed unanimously. Information of this change was conveyed to the duke at Arras; he immediately signed a truce with the insurgents,

* Froissart, ut antè, ii. 40.

and ordered a day to be fixed for conferences, to be holden at Tournay, to confirm the peace. The deputies sent by the people of Ghent to attend the conference travelled with a splendour and magnificence superior to that of the ambassadors of sovereign princes. They entered Tournay in a kind of triumphant procession: this gave great offence to the French and Burgundian nobles, who expected that the people of Ghent would present themselves in the guise of penitents, who deeply regretted their late rebellion against their liege lord. On this point, the negotiations had a very narrow escape from being shipwrecked: the citizens of Ghent were as haughty as any nobles in the land; and some recent successes, though very trifling in amount, had increased their proverbial obstinacy ten-fold. When introduced into the duke's presence, they refused to kneel down, to ask pardon, or to make any concessions whatever. Philip of Burgundy was so much offended by this pertinacity, which appears to have been carried to an unnecessary and ridiculous extent, that he was almost about to dismiss the deputation with an angry and menacing reply; but the duchesses of Burgundy and Brabant, the countess of Hainault, and several other ladies, throwing themselves on their knees, supplicated the pardon for Ghent which its citizens were too proud to ask for themselves. Philip, who really wanted only some plausible pretext for yielding, consented to the request of

the ladies. It was agreed as a preliminary that all past offences should be buried in oblivion, and that the duke should be recognized as the hereditary sovereign of Flanders. Peter du Bois and several others, who were disinclined to trust the government of a French prince, were allowed to sell their properties and remove to England during the negotiations. They settled themselves in the neighbourhood of the Flemish families which had come over to England in the reign of Edward III.; and this fresh importation of manufacturers and capitalists was a chief cause of the rapid growth of manufacturing industry in England at the close of the fourteenth century.

The war of liberty in Flanders was now ended: all ancient immunities, franchises, and privileges were solemnly confirmed; all the sovereigns of the Netherlands, and the ambassadors of France, pledged themselves as guarantees for the fulfilment of the treaty; and the Flemings thus gained everything that they had sought by the war. All exiles were restored; but many of those who returned to their country had forgotten nothing, and learned nothing, during the period of their absence. Domestic feuds, arising out of outrages committed during the civil war, long disturbed public tranquillity. Ackerman, who had taken such an active part in effecting the pacification, was assassinated by the son of a nobleman who had fallen in the late war; and the government was either

unable or unwilling to bring the murderers to trial. But these disturbances gradually subsided: commerce and industry resumed their usual courses, and the manufacturing cities of Flanders entered on a new career of tranquillity and prosperity.

But, in France, the efforts of the middle classes to obtain emancipation from feudal tyranny, or even any alleviation of their burthens, had been miserably frustrated. They commenced their struggle with equal courage and moderation: they were superior to the nobles in wealth, firmness, and virtue: but they had failed, though their chief opponents were a boy-king, in whom the traces of the insanity which rendered his subsequent reign so calamitous were already discernible; a council of princes of the blood, most of whom were equally contemptible in ability, and infamous in character; and a nobility, barbarous, ignorant, and rapacious, without elevation of soul, without patriotism, and, on several occasions, without courage. We have already observed, that this failure was mainly owing to the isolation of the French cities, produced by the distracted and deserted state of the rural districts, ravaged by repeated wars. But this isolation was increased by the jealousy between the different communes: it might with truth be said of them, as of the municipalities and trading companies in Flanders, that, "while their tyrants joined in hate, they never joined in love." From the moment

that monopoly and selfish interest began to influence separate sections of the mercantile aristocracy, the discord which they introduced increased at the most rapid rate, and their opponents were sure of finding allies amongst the trading classes, willing to become agents in the oppression of themselves and their country, if they were permitted, under the name of protection and monopoly, to effect some petty robbery of their neighbours. The burgesses of the French towns committed the further error of neglecting the lower classes: had they evinced any sympathy for the grievous sufferings of the peasantry, they might have obtained active support from the rural population; but they avoided all contact with rustic insurgents, and were even found to cheer the nobles to their destruction.

On the other hand, the feudal nobles rose as one man in defence of their ascendancy and their privileges; they had with them the crown, the church, and the constituted authorities of the realm: hence they were always able to act in concert, and to bring their whole force against any locality where attempts were made to resist tyranny. The accounts which we have of the Artavelds, and other popular leaders, have been transmitted to us by their enemies; chiefly by Froissart, who wrote professedly for the amusement of the aristocracy. We are not, therefore, always able to determine what were their pro-

jects, plans, and hopes; the resources on which they could fairly rely, and the difficulties against which they had to struggle. Philip Von Artaveld appears to us more clearly defined by the historians than any of the other popular leaders: he was drawn reluctantly from retirement to head his citizens at a crisis of great danger; he embraced the popular cause from conviction, and he never ceased to denounce the tyranny of the nobles as the cause that had driven the Flemings to insurrection; he relied on the justice of his cause, and he looked to be supported by the sympathies of the oppressed throughout Europe.*

The insuperable difficulty in his way was the almost total want of a sound education in the burgess class. The citizens felt their grievances, but had not sufficient intelligence to investigate the proper means of redress: in countless instances they realized the parable of the dog snapping at the stick that beats him, and

* Mr. Henry Taylor, from whose beautiful drama we have largely quoted already, has given with great effect Artaveld's denunciation of the feudal oppressions practised by the nobles:

> The blood that they have shed will bide no longer
> In the blood-soaken soil, but cries to heaven.
> Their cruelties and wrongs against the poor
> Shall quicken into swarms of venomous snakes,
> And hiss through all the earth, till o'er the earth,
> That ceases then from hissings and from groans,
> Rises the song, 'How are the mighty fallen!'
> And by the peasant's hand. Low lie the proud!

not at the hand that wields it. Nothing can more clearly show the want of education in Flanders than the eagerness with which the trading companies accepted charters of monopoly as bribes for abandoning the cause of the confederates: and it may be further remarked, that we nowhere find these monopolies decried as evils in themselves; the grievance was, that they were given to one party rather than the other.

With the exception of the Artavelds, none of the leaders of the insurgents in Flanders exhibited remarkable qualifications either as statesmen or generals. Their notions of the distances, respective force, population, finances, and political interests of the states by which they were surrounded, appear to have been exceedingly vague and confused; they had greater wealth at their command than the king of France and all his great lords put together, but their financial resources were disproportioned to their riches; in many cases, and

> And smitten with the weapons of the poor,
> The blacksmith's hammer, and the woodman's axe!
> Their tale is told: and for that they were rich,
> And robbed the poor; and for that they were strong,
> And scourged the weak; and for that they made laws,
> Which turned the sweat of labour's brow to blood,—
> For these their sins the nations cast them out,
> The dunghills are their death-beds, and the stench
> Turns in the nostrils of enfranchis'd man
> To a sweet savour. These things come to pass
> From small beginnings, because God is just.
>
> *Philip Von Art.* ii. 38.

particularly when Ghent was suffering from famine, it would seem as if they had been unable to obtain credit either abroad or at home.

During this long struggle no attempt was made to combine religious with political reformation, either in France or Flanders: it is true that the schism of the West raged,—that some adhered to the pope of Avignon, and others to the pope of Rome; but this was a controversy of persons, not of principles; ecclesiastical abuses and corruptions of the faith were patronized by both parties alike. The Flemings and the French were equally blighted by ignorance and superstition, they wanted the enthusiasm which the thorough conviction of some new and great truth is sure to inspire; all the interests at issue during the war were purely physical, and hence meanness of motive was frequently combined with honourable purpose. It was a war of enduring results, rather than of bright examples; it conveyed much bitter, and some profitable instruction, both to the rulers and the governed: the former learned from it the costliness of injustice; the latter, the value of subordination: it might have further taught that the power which is not wielded for the public good becomes a curse to its possessor, and that the freedom which is not based on equal rights is predestined to speedy destruction.

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